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Congress Declares War On Children,
See Pages 3,8

When Teens Talk, Marcyliena Morgan Gets It. Do You?

see page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Welcome, New Teachers

Teaching isn't for everyone. Pulitzer-prize winning author Tracy Kidder, in his book *Among Schoolchildren*, tells the story of a young man, recently out of college, who decided to try his hand at substitute teaching in a Holyoke, Massachusetts public elementary school.

It wasn't even noon when the principal, making his third visit to restore order in the substitute's room, told him to go home. The screams of pupils had broadcast his failure throughout the Kelly School.

"He left with his collar loosened, his necktie askew," Kidder writes. "He had to go down the main hallway to get out of there, and he walked as fast as a man can without running."

It was every beginning teacher's worst nightmare come true.

Managing a room full of children or teenagers, keeping them focused, looks a lot easier from outside the classroom. As one new teacher wrote in her journal, "I wish we came with a set of directions."

Teaching is the only profession where the beginner is expected to do what the veteran does and with equal success. The kinds of supervised apprenticeships provided for new entrants in other professions—architects, electricians, nurses, doctors, engineers—are largely absent in teaching.

NEA President
Keith Geiger

Many beginning teachers find that their college training did not prepare them for those first days of flying solo in the classroom. And, unfortunately, research shows that the way a teacher manages a classroom during the first month affects student performance the whole rest of the school year.

All of which means that first-year teachers need our whole-hearted support. They need veteran teachers to reach out to them—not with a stern lecture on the right way to do things, but as professional colleagues who are interested in answering any questions the newcomer may have.

The NEA Professional Library offers two practical survival guides that many beginning teachers have found useful: *The First-Year Teacher* by Karen Bosch and Katharine Kersey and *Countdown to the First Day Of School* by Leo Schell and Paul Burden.*

Bosch and Kersey stress that the first big management task for beginning teachers, more important even than academics, is to teach students "the rules, consequences, incentives, procedures, and routines" of their classroom.

New teachers, bless their Generation X hearts, probably won't be all that interested in hearing about the hardships veteran teachers had to endure in the bad old days—how you had to walk a picket line in the freezing rain to earn the rights and benefits everyone now takes for granted.

But they will be interested in learning how to avoid getting sued, how to find the time and financial support to advance their professional skills, and how to bring late 20th century information technologies into their classroom before the new century begins.

Teachers are teachers, be they 23 or 43 or 63. Teachers have a gift for giving. It drives them with the same irrepressible force that drives others to create a new software program or a company. That gift transcends generations.

The likelihood that the teacher in the classroom next door will be a first-year teacher grows every year. Over the next 10 years, 200,000 new teachers will have to be hired annually. In other words, fully half the teachers who will be teaching in the year 2005 have not yet been hired.

The future of our profession and our Association depends on new teachers learning from veteran teachers the true meaning of mutual support. Otherwise the extremists and privatizers will have their way and public education will be Balkanized—and us with it.

Our future also depends on veteran teachers learning from their younger colleagues, among other things, how to cruise the Net and how to communicate more effectively with their fellow professionals everywhere.

So let's welcome the new teachers into the NEA family. We need them; they need us. This could be the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

*To order these or other NEA Professional Library books, call 800/229-4200.

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Cover photograph by Bob Riha, Jr.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Congress Declares War On Children

The first casualties will be Kay Threlkeld's seventh graders.

Kay Pfeiffer

Through small-class instruction and lots of parental involvement, Title 1 reading teacher Kay Threlkeld—aided by a full-time assistant—helps students with rock-bottom test scores "discover pleasure and delight in books and pride in becoming fluent readers."

As a result, "we see significant increases in many students' test scores," she boasts. "They become better readers and this helps them progress in other subjects."

But Congress, which funds the Title I (basic skills) program for disadvantaged children, is keener these days on boosting upper-income tax refunds than reading scores.

In a virtual declaration of war on children, the House has voted to cut education spending by some $4 billion in Fiscal Year 1996. That means funding cuts in everything from technology and drug education to English language education and school safety.

And it means 1.1 million students would no longer get Title I services.

Senate budget action was expected in September. As you read this, the final decisions on the education budget will be occuring in Washington. Please take a moment to send Congress the message that you care about education and children. (See "What You Can Do," below).

Threlkeld, who teaches at Alta Vista Middle School in Carlsbad, New Mexico, worries about what the Congressional cuts will mean for her students.

"They don't qualify for special education," she points out, "but they'll flounder in a regular classroom unless we can help them improve their reading skills. A lot of them could drop out of school."

She also worries about cutbacks for food stamps—"we have so many people living on so little money"—and a possible scaleback of migrant and early childhood education programs.

In a community like Carlsbad—which has an unemployment rate exceeding 9 percent—the weakening of such supports is an economic death sentence. And that misery can only be compounded by pending Congressional cuts in health care, job training and summer employment, and college loans.

"It is striking to me," says NEA President Keith Geiger, "that even among professional educators, most people have no idea of the depth and danger of the planned cuts. They are *real.* They are written into the budget resolution passed by the House and Senate in May, and they will be finalized in the appropriations bills that pass this fall."

If Congressional leaders get their way, you'll see damage like this on a national scale:

➤ Funds for drug prevention and school safety will be eliminated in 97 percent of the school districts.

➤ Despite a documented need for 48,000 additional teachers for children with disabilities, a $90 million teacher preparation program will be eliminated.

➤ Some 250,000 students will lose eligibility for postsecondary education grants and vocational funding will be cut by 28 percent—at a time of greater need for highly skilled workers.

➤ Opportunities for language minority children to improve their English skills will be cut by 75 percent—in spite of the fact that in some areas they comprise one-fourth of the population.

—Dave Winans

For more information on how the proposed cuts will affect students in

WHAT YOU CAN DO

➤ Call your members of Congress at 202/224-3121 and urge them to support programs for education and children.

If you have personal knowledge of a federal education program that works especially well—like school nutrition or Title I—pass this information along to your elected representatives.

➤ Write to your representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives (Washington, DC 20515) and the U.S. Senate (Washington, DC 20510).

➤ Send lawmakers an e-mail on NEA Online. For Congressional e-mail addresses, keyword: NEA Local and go to the "Must Reads" library.

➤ Write President Clinton and urge him to honor his promise to veto cuts in education spending.

➤ Send letters to your local newspaper and voice your opinion on radio talk shows.

➤ Ask your school system's business manager how much federal funding your district receives and what it pays for. Share this information with colleagues and members of Congress.

➤ Plan local events that publicize the effects of federal spending cuts.

HEROES & ZEROES

A Caped-Cancer-Crusader Award to Maryland paraprofessional and NEA member Phyllis Seward. A 25-year cancer survivor, Seward travels the state volunteering her time to help support recovering cancer patients and lead workshops on cancer awareness and survival. "We all have the chance to help others," she says. "This is mine." (For more on cancer awareness, see page 30.)

Carolyn Salisbury

A bona fide Booby Prize to Wonderbra for an ad campaign so sleazy and degrading, it actually gives voting a bad name. The ad features three seductive women in "push-up, plunge" bras, then asks readers to choose the one they like best. "Sure beats voting for president," the ad proclaims. Is this a way to get more people to the polls?

A Thanks-for-Noticing Award to *Child* magazine for its recent coverage of the nation's public schools. Not far from the headline—"A+ for America's Schools"—readers will find this welcome sentence: "*News flash:* While there is certainly room for improvement, never before has education been more exciting, energized, and right for kids." Ahhhhh, that feels good.

The Blowing-Smoke-in-Our-Face Award to major health insurance companies that are heavily invested in tobacco company stock. As of January 1995, Prudential led the way with a rock-solid $248 million in holdings. Other health care giants—like Cigna, Travelers, MetLife (recently merged with Travelers), and Aetna—are big investers, too. Health be damned—there are profits at stake!

A Making-Millions-Matter Award to music mogul David Geffen, who recently gave $4 million to two AIDS service organizations in New York City. One agency provides testing, education, and counseling; the other delivers hot-meals to those home-bound with AIDS.

COVER STORY

FIGHTING WORDS?

There's the dis, the snap, the crack. A top linguistic anthropologist says the key to defusing violence is understanding the meaning behind the words teens use.

UCLA anthropologist Marcyliena Morgan

As a researcher currently studying urban adolescent language, Marcyliena Morgan has interviewed hundreds of kids—from hip hop musicians to taggers (graffiti artists) to her own freshman students at UCLA.

"As a linguistic anthropologist, I like to talk with young people and study the tremendous body of language that kids bring into the classroom," Morgan explains. "It's all about their search for identity, and I find that fascinating."

Morgan also looks at the words used in hip hop music and the way kids are influenced by the media from underground radio stations, to magazines, to the Internet.

"Because all of these avenues feed into youth culture and shape its language, I try to examine the context and the reasons for certain words and phrases and the staying power of others."

Why should educators care?

"Because at this stage of social and intellectual development," says Morgan, "teens constantly come up against authority figures, namely in school, and educators can get a better sense of where the kids are coming from if they understand what kids are saying."

Below, Morgan answers questions from NEA members around the country.

There seems to be a lot more aggressive, disrespectful talk now. Why?

George Woods, high school teacher, Los Angeles, California.

Because today's youth don't see the school as a special place outside their neighborhood, their world. The old boundaries have blurred and the school is taking in what's all around it. That's why aggressive language has escalated since the 1980s. The easy access to media of all forms is another reason. And it's really hard not to buy into the youth culture. It's intense, graphic, defiant, exciting, and very real to teens.

I hear students putting each other down in the most outrageous ways, using words sometimes as bludgeons. How can I tell the difference between play and serious language if it all sounds serious to me?

Karen Bell, high school teacher, Riverside, California

You may not be able to tell the difference between play and serious language, but there are a lot of signals when a verbal battle is changing. The voices may start rising and sound more and more tense. If the exchanges are about mothers, for example, you may hear someone say, "Don't talk about my mother," and you know that a comment may have hit too close to home.

Joe Di Dio

Gwendolyn Montgomery

If that person completely loses his cool, then he loses the game. That's when you just need to be a little more aware of the exchange. But don't assume it's a fight waiting to happen and step in. Sometimes these verbal exchanges, however tough to hear, are really games the kids play.

If kids use language to exclude adults, what's the point in understanding it?

Robert McLendon, high school teacher, Yuma, Arizona

Kids use specialized vocabulary to make their world manageable. They don't do it to keep adults out. They might enjoy leaving adults in the cold, but their way of talking helps them assert their move into adulthood. They recognize that they have some power and that there are others like them. Adults need to understand what teens are saying because we care about what they're going through. We have to understand each other. They can't make it without us, and we can't make it without them.

What does it mean when students say "I'm just raggin' and baggin'—don't worry about it." What are they really doing?

Debbie Smith, high school teacher, Orange, California

Robert Chase

Carol Steele

Ragging, bagging, snapping, cracking—these are all word games teens use as a way of competing with one another. It's all based on the notion of keeping one's cool and, to a teen, staying cool has everything to do with the sense of self and identity.

These games, trading insults and teases back and forth, are a test of strength—you have to be strong to participate and you don't want to lose your dignity. The kids are often flexing themselves in this verbal play. It may sound more threatening, but it usually

COVER STORY

Bob Riha, Jr.

doesn't erupt into any physical confrontation.

One of my colleagues heard, "Let's kick this jam right now," and nearly called school security. I knew what the kids really meant was, "Let's relax." How can people avoid taking words the wrong way?

Gwendolyn Montgomery, high school teacher, New London, Connecticut

"Kick this jam" means "play this music," and your colleague might have created a problem that wasn't there by stepping in. It helps to know what kids mean by certain phrases, and the only way to know is to ask.

Knowing the language and language styles urban kids—and by this I don't mean city kids, but anyone nowadays heavily influenced by radio, TV, media, and youth culture—use gives you a better feel for the context in which the words are used. It's okay to ask "what's going on?" or "what does that mean?"

Among boys, it seems the exchanges are verbal slams at each other. But girls don't do that as much. Yet I've heard of more fights among girls. Is there something I'm missing?

Joan Grassman, junior high school teacher, Bedford, Massachusetts

Yes. Girls don't engage in the often cruel word games that boys do, but very often, girls engage in what we call "instigating." It's a very complicated system of tracking back a rumor or nasty comment and what they see as backstabbing. With boys, the verbal battle is over in a short time, but for girls instigating can go on for weeks, even months.

It's really about finding out who is a friend. Someone may hear, "You know she gets her clothes at K-mart," and go to elaborate lengths to find out who started the rumor. If the person discovers the instigator was a friend, these confrontations can break out in physical fights. What's at stake is a really complicated friendship system.

Some kids use profanity in nearly every other breath. Where's that coming from and what can I do about it?

Liz Thorsen, school secretary, Woodhaven, Michigan

Profanity is one of the hardest issues to deal with, but it's not impossible. If there's profanity in the halls or in a classroom, the first thing to do is figure out what words are at issue. You also have to figure out how the words are being used.

Some words are used as support words or friendship terms—kids don't believe they're cursing since it's part of neighborhood speech, so they interpret "Don't curse," as "Don't speak." It's important to be clear and tell them that it's not okay in the context of the school or classroom and that the words are interpreted as curse words. Once they hear that, then it's possible to set up guidelines they'll accept.

Mark Hoffman

Francisco Rios

If *phat* is good and *wack* is bad, how do I keep it all straight?

Alan Pryce, high school teacher, Memphis, Tennessee

To keep it all straight, just remember two things. First, ask students what the words they use really mean or provide situations where they can talk about it. Second, if you allow students to discuss what their words and expressions mean, set up some basic principles of respect that everyone must follow. For example, explain that you're not willing to discuss sexually explicit terms.

Kids' language isn't just verbal these days. What's a student trying to say when he wears a t-shirt that says, "Kill all cops," or "Shut up you stupid bitch"? How do I deal with that?

Francisco Rios, school security officer, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Unfortunately, one thing we have to remember is that there's no law against buying the shirt, so it's hard to just say take it off. What one teacher I know did was continue to ask questions of a student with a similar "cops" shirt. A student can often feel so uncomfortable realizing that the shirt is offensive to others that he may choose not to wear it again. And it's really about choices anyway. Get the student in a dialogue so he can learn that with choice comes responsibility.

My kids sometimes stop talking when I walk into the room. Should I be grateful?

Carol Steele, high school teacher, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Yes. They see you as too fragile for this game, and they respect your need to have a different language style around you. They may also remember that certain words aren't appropriate. It may be a reflection of their respect for you.

—Anita Merina

Heard any of these in yours halls? Here's a glossary of words and meaning, courtesy of Marcyliena Morgan and students at New London (Connecticut) High School.

- ***All that:*** phenomenal, as in "She's all that—and a bag of chips."
- ***Barney:*** An ugly boy that reminds you of the hideous character Barney the Dinosaur
- ***Buggin':*** Going crazy, behaving strangely
- ***Butt, Boo:*** When something is totally thumbs down
- ***Butta:*** smooth like butter, really fly
- ***Cap:*** bullet, also to criticize
- ***Clockin':*** watching
- ***Crack:*** insult or tease
- ***C.R.E.A.M:*** Cash Rules Everything Around Me. Cream is money.
- ***Digits:*** phone number
- ***Dis:*** disrespect or insult
- ***The D.L.:*** The Down Low, hush-hush, secret
- ***Fade:*** to embarrass
- ***Flava:*** ultra fly
- ***Fly:*** very attractive
- ***"G":*** gangster
- ***Gat:*** gun
- ***Heads:*** people
- ***Hit the skins/Slap skins:*** have sex
- ***Jockin':*** irritating
- ***Juice:*** power and influence
- ***Kickin' (also chillin' buggin'):*** relaxing
- ***Mad:*** a lot, as in a lot of money
- ***Peeps:*** the people who support you
- ***Perpetrating:*** pretending to be someone you're not or pretending to believe something you really don't believe
- ***Phat:*** exceptional, cool
- ***P.J.'s:*** the Projects
- ***Play:*** to deceive or trick
- ***Rank:*** insult
- ***Represent:*** to honor or embody
- ***Salty:*** Angry
- ***Snap:*** insult or tease
- ***Tired:*** out of date
- ***Wack:*** worthless, poor quality, weak, stupid

For more teen phrases just e-mail teentalk@cet.nea.org by October 31, and we'll e-mail you a list of contemporary teenspeakese.

HUMAN RIGHTS

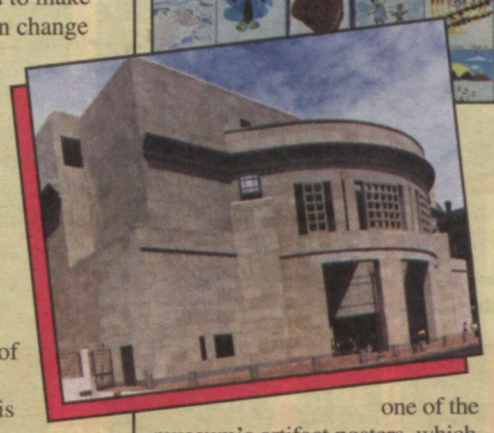
Humanity Lessons

Believe it or not, teaching about the Holocaust can be a motivational experience for your students.

When he's teaching social studies to seventh graders, Baltimore county educator Thomas Stroschein has a very specific goal in mind.

"Students feel that they are the only ones who are persecuted. My job is to show them they're not alone and to make them believe they can change their lives."

To that end, Stroschein has been teaching students in his world cultures class at the Charles Carroll of Carollton School to examine people's historical inhumanity to one another as an aspect of culture.



Stroschein does this by teaching units on slavery and segregation in the United States, apartheid in South Africa, and discrimination against Moslems in Europe. Not only does he focus on the problems, but he introduces students to people who have made a difference. Together, they discuss possible solutions.

Thanks to a special two-year partnership between the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. and the Baltimore public schools, Stroschein has been able to add a unit on the Holocaust.

Eager to help educators, the Memorial Holocaust Museum staff visited Stroschein's classroom, gave a slide tour of the museum, and led faculty discussions about Holocaust teaching.

Museum staffers also provided opportunities for students to talk with survivors and rescuers. And they placed loads of educational materials into the hands of teachers—which Stroschein as "project teacher" distributes to his colleagues.

"Best of all," says Stroschein, "the museum sent us two buses to take the students to Washington for museum tours. And the tours were practically one-on-one: a tour guide for every four students."

In his classroom, Stroschein introduces the Holocaust by dividing the class into small groups and giving each group one of the museum's artifact posters, which show maps and photos of such things as victims' shoes, forged ID papers, and the stars and triangles used to classify victims.

Then he asks the students to find out about the concepts depicted and teach the rest of the class what they've learned.

"During their museum visit," he says, "the exercise showed the students to be virtual experts." One student on probation made the school proud by talking to the tour guide about the placement of artifacts in display cases. Stroschein fought for his inclusion in the field trip, even though most said the boy would refuse to participate.

The students' experience with the materials and in the museum revealed their sensitivity. On one occasion, they met with a woman whose relatives had all been killed in Russia.

"The students hardly asked any questions about her presentation," Stroschein says. He was baffled—until they explained. They didn't want her to dwell on bad memories.

Stroschein's school is an hour's drive from the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum—yours is probably quite a bit farther. But you can still get classroom materials to use in teaching about the Holocaust (see box).

"Try it," says Stroschein. "Don't be afraid."

—Mary Faber

NEA Human and Civil Rights

RESOURCES

➤ The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum offers a free Introductory Packet for Educators, which contains listings of teacher resources, handouts on the history of the Holocaust, request form for visits to the Museum, and an order form for the Museum's Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust, Annotated Bibliography, and Annotated Videography.

To order, contact the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Resource Center for Educators, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Pl., S.W., Washington DC 20024-2150, 202/488-2661. Or send e-mail to education@ushmm.org.

➤ Many of these educational resources are available on the World Wide Web (http://www.ushmm/org/), including lesson plans and curricula developed by teachers, schools, and community organizations; books; audiovisual aides; bulletin boards; and state-by-state files of programs, organizations, and individuals.

➤ For a free catalog of materials available through the Museum Shop, write to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, S.W., Washington, DC 20024-2150. The artifact poster set is available for $29.95 plus $5.95 s&h. The Holocaust book for children, *Tell Them We Remember*, is available for $10.95 plus $4.95 s&h.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Person To Watch

Within the Clinton Administration, Undersecretary of Education **Marshall S. Smith** coordinates development of legislation advancing quality education. He works to ensure that the federal government—through the Department of Education—works as a partner with state and local governments to enhance quality, establish meaningful reform, keep schools safe, and prepare students for jobs of the future.

Watch How Members of Congress Vote

How members of Congress vote now on appropriations and other matters that affect children and education will determine the level of NEA support they receive in the '96 elections. The Association is monitoring how their votes impact: children's health and safety, student preparation for jobs of the future, strengthening of public education, and rights of school employees.

What You Can Do

Write or call your Senators and House members. The message: Oppose cuts to education and children's programs. And while you're writing, let President Clinton know you support his plan to veto the appropriations and budget reconciliation bills—which would threaten the future of public education in all 50 states.

Political Cartoon of the Month

Marlette © 1995 Newsday

Congressional Quote of the Month

"Our macro priority of balancing the budget is right, but the micro priority that cuts $10 billion in human investment is absolutely wrong and future generations will pay for that in this country."

—Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Wisconsin)

Meet:

Photographs by Linda R. Chen

LouAnne Johnson

Teacher on the Big Screen

A former U.S. Marine officer and Navy journalist, LouAnne Johnson knows all about battles. Not the kind that pit country against country. But the kind that pit Hispanic students against Black students, boys against girls, and students against teachers.

A few years ago, Johnson left her military fatigues behind and began teaching high school English to students from the poorest and toughest neighborhoods in East Palo Alto, California. From her experiences, the former NEA member wrote My Posse Don't Do Homework *and* The Girls in the Back of the Class. *Last summer, the books were made into the movie "Dangerous Minds," starring Michelle Pfeiffer.*

Johnson recently spoke with NEA Today *writer Karen Gutloff.*

What was it like being portrayed on screen by Michelle Pfeiffer?
It's very unreal. Imagine, someone calls you up and says "who would you like to see portray you in a movie?" That's what they said to me. I laughed. I said I don't know. They asked me "what do you think about Michelle Pfeiffer?" I thought they were kidding. So I said, "Couldn't you get someone good-looking?"

You've said you wrote *Posse*
because you were mad. Mad about what?
I was mad about stupid things like when they closed down the school library part-time and then said, "We don't have any money for textbooks, and we don't have any paper after September." Then they turned around and painted the building and landscaped and planted trees. I asked them, "Where did you get the money for this?" And they said, "It's a different budget." Those kind of things just make me crazy. And I'm really angry about the idea that people would rather incarcerate than educate young people. That, to me, is criminal.

On your first day in school, a kid threw a dictionary at you. You walked out, but came back. Why?
I wanted to know why he did it. I think we have to remember these kids are angry and they're afraid. That belligerence is usually hiding hurt. Besides, after having been in the military for nine years, no one is going to throw a book at me and scare me out of a job that I want to do. And what about the other 30 kids?

How did your Marine training help you deal with discipline problems?
I learned how to motivate people to do what I want them to do. For example, if a group of boys acts up, and you point at them and say, "Hey, you, move over there," there's no dignity involved. Instead, I say, "Excuse me, you're making my job difficult. I want one of you to move over there now." If they don't want to move, I say, "Okay, then I trust you can behave and not interrupt me. If it happens again, somebody will have to move." They say okay, and we shake hands on it. We now have a deal.

Why don't you lay down the law?
That would create a me-against-them environment—every day a struggle, every day a fight. I'd rather take a week or two to establish rapport, then, during the year, I don't have many discipline problems because kids know what is expected.

What was most effective in the classroom?
Humor. Some kid would say, "I don't want to do this!" And I would respond, "Do it anyway—it's good practice. When you get married, you'll be doing things you don't want to do. If you don't believe me, go home and ask your daddy." The kids will laugh, and once they laugh, it breaks the tension.

You showered students with hugs, gifts, candy, and trips. Why?
I was trying to get them to realize that I cared about them as individuals. And I wanted to try something different. I would always do the opposite of what they expected. If they expected me to yell, I wouldn't yell. If they expected me to call mommy, I'd write her nice letters.

How should schools change to better reach kids?
For one thing, schools are too big. You create a mini-city, and you have a top and bottom structure, just like in any city, with the muggers and the victims.

What were some of your students' greatest accomplishments?
I've had students who started out as sophomores saying, "There's no way I'm going to college." But they come back as seniors and say, "I'm going to give college a try." To know I helped them make that kind of change in their vision of themselves—that's worth it.

Grassroots

State

HAWAII

Hawaii recently became the twelfth state in the nation to create an autonomous teacher standards board.

HSTA President June Motokawa stresses that the panel, which includes four certified teachers, can professionalize teaching, ensure "consumer protection" and quality, end issuance of temporary certificates, and make the license to teach a "meaningful credential."

TEXAS

The Texas State Teachers Association isn't resting on its laurels after helping defeat voucher legislation. TSTA is conducting a pro-public school Blue Ribbon Campaign that began with TSTA officers briefing the press in 20 cities. At the same time, Association members and administrators festooned school sites with blue ribbons.

ARIZONA

When television station KPNX made a public records request for the birthdates of all county school teachers, the Arizona Education Association and the school districts in Maricopa County let station officials know they crossed the line.

The station intended to use the birthdates to find criminal records, but many members worried the information would also facilitate credit checks and age discrimination. Swayed by member concerns, the school districts filed a lawsuit against the station to stop release of the information. AEA filed an amicus brief with member affidavits.

The Arizona Superior Court sided with school employees and turned down the station's request.

ARKANSAS

Twelve teachers in Hughes won a total of $177,000 in back pay, after the Arkansas Education Association took legal action. Earlier this year, AEA UniServ Director Jim Banks found the Hughes school district had paid employees less than it had claimed. "It was just a stroke of luck that we discovered the problem." Banks says.

The district refused to pay the difference, so AEA brought the case to court. The court made the district pay up—with interest.

Lost Opportunities: Count 'Em

The U.S. House of Representatives has adopted a seven-year budget plan that directly attacks kids' opportunities to learn. The cuts will start October 1—if Congress overrides an expected veto by President Clinton, what would the House budget mean for your state? Check below.

State	Children shut out of Head Start by the year 2002	Students excluded from Title 1 in Fiscal Year 1996	College students denied Pell Grants in Fiscal Year 1996
Alabama	3,525	23,200	7,400
Alaska	294	1,300	500
Arizona	2,400	17,300	6,600
Arkansas	2,201	15,000	3,600
California	17,233	236,100	34,500
Colorado	1,972	6,900	5,100
Connecticut	1,374	9,200	2,200
Delaware	354	1,500	600
Florida	6,654	35,500	16,200
Georgia	4,726	28,700	8,000
Hawaii	548	2,500	600
Idaho	465	4,200	1,700
Illinois	7,417	30,900	13,900
Indiana	2,846	16,500	8,600
Iowa	1,445	6,200	5,000
Kansas	1,408	6,000	4,300
Kentucky	3,416	19,100	6,000
Louisiana	4,702	19,700	7,700
Maine	835	4,900	1,300
Maryland	2,068	11,900	4,600
Massachusetts	2,622	16,100	6,700
Michigan	7,456	30,100	14,000
Minnesota	2,081	14,000	7,300
Mississippi	5,857	25,800	5,000
Missouri	3,414	18,300	7,900
Montana	561	2,800	1,600
Nebraska	884	5,500	2,900
Nevada	436	2,200	1,200
New Hampshire	280	2,300	1,100
New Jersey	3,135	30,800	6,400
New Mexico	1,555	9,200	3,000
New York	9,488	78,500	33,300
North Carolina	3,808	20,400	7,100
North Dakota	422	2,100	1,500
Ohio	8,239	32,000	15,400
Oklahoma	2,712	10,200	6,200
Oregon	1,127	8,800	3,900
Pennsylvania	6,241	44,800	14,100
Rhode Island	602	2,600	1,600
South Carolina	2,464	11,700	4,600
South Dakota	492	2,600	1,500
Tennessee	3,490	21,900	7,000
Texas	12,512	99,600	23,400
Utah	979	6,100	4,300
Vermont	309	2,100	700
Virginia	2,671	13,100	7,200
Washington	2,006	10,800	5,800
West Virginia	1,556	5,900	2,600
Wisconsin	2,904	11,900	6,200
Wyoming	321	900	800

IN CALIFORNIA

Outlook Is Sunnier

Recently plagued by natural disasters and financial woes, California Teachers Association members finally have something to cheer about. The 1995-96 state budget includes an increase of nearly $1 billion for public education.

After weeks of bitter debate within the state legislature, Governor Pete Wilson approved the budget in early August. It includes a 2.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment for teachers—the first increase in four years—as well as several one-time grants for programs such as special education. Furthermore, the grants will help shore up areas in dire need of assistance—areas such as

The Sacramento Bee

California has had "the dubious distinction of housing children in schools where roofs leak, some classrooms are unsafe, and many need immediate repair," says CTA's Lois Tinson.

building maintenance.

"This is one of the best budgets we've had in recent years," says CTA President Lois Tinson.

The budget is even more remarkable considering Governor Wilson's original proposals. Earlier this year, CTA members helped stop a Wilson-backed plan that would have slashed K-12 and community school funding by $3.9 billion over four years.

Association members around the state worked in coalition with school boards and private organizations to contact lawmakers by phone, fax, mail, and in person.

Now that money is finally available, CTA is urging members to get involved in decisions over how it will be used. "They know where the need is greatest," says Tinson."

IN WISCONSIN

Marny Malin/*The Journal Times*

***WHALE 'SWALLOWS' 10,000 CHILDREN A YEAR:** To teach weights, volumes, and a little marine biology, NEA Student Program volunteers from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside tour area elementary schools with a 55-foot plastic humpback whale. UW-Parkside student Kandi Bouma, left, prepares a kindergarten class for the best part of the lesson—a walk inside the whale's stomach.*

IN NORTH CAROLINA

Education Keeps On Ticking

In North Carolina's last legislative session, an anti-education tidal wave hit an indestructible seawall.

Association members—cemented together with pro-education Democrats, Republicans, and business leaders—defeated voucher and tuition tax credit bills, stopped assaults on teacher tenure and Association payroll dues deduction, and even won salary, health care, and leave improvements.

And, literally defending democracy, grassroots Association lobbyists killed legislation that would have ended elections for state superintendent and judges.

Energized by its gains—running the gamut from lower first-grade class sizes to increased funding for technology and alternative schools—the North Carolina Association of Educators isn't stopping now. In the next legislative session, NCAE will push for a program to raise educators' salaries to the national average by the year 2000.

North Carolina members learned this year that they can't fight such battles alone. While faxing and phoning lawmakers, they lobbied in coalition with other education groups and even the Chamber of Commerce, which saw the link between economic development and healthy public schools.

NCAE also worked with Republicans who care about public education. A cadre of Republican educators 100-strong stayed and talked to GOP legislators while the extremist tidal wave towered over them.

"Our Republican friends were under great stress," notes NCAE President Rose Marie Lowry-Townsend. "But they were with us all the way."

IN INDIANA

Indianapolis Teachers Fight For Voice

As Indianapolis teachers start this school year, they face a whole new ball game. But they're challenging its rules and playing *offense*.

Last spring, Indiana's legislative leadership shoehorned school "reform" language sought by Indianapolis Mayor Steven Goldsmith into the state budget. The law, which applies exclusively to Indiana's largest city, provides for top-down "enhanced intervention" measures ranging from arbitrary teacher evaluations to "academic receiverships" (school takeovers).

This legislation, now being challenged by the Indiana State Teachers Association, would wipe out contractual protections like due process and transfer rights. It would also deny educators a voice in instructional issues.

What's worse, S.B. 256 would limit bargaining to salaries and fringes, implement merit pay, and mandate twice-yearly teacher evaluations based on parental involvement, student achievement, employee attendance, "plus anything else the school board wants to throw in," says Joyce Macke, president of the Indianapolis Education Association.

The local Association is conducting an extensive member mobilization campaign—with emphasis on one-on-one organizing, plus education on S.B. 256.

The Association also is training members in local decision making.

"We aren't trying to prevent the district from moving ahead on school reform," stresses UniServ Director Yvonne Stone, "but teachers need to be part of the action."

Local

NEW MEXICO

In an agreement ratified in August, NEA-Santa Fe members won an average 6 percent increase—for the third year running—and a unified, "common sense" salary schedule for teachers and support employees.

NEA-Santa Fe members reached out to the community and school administrators to secure better salaries and end staff turnover in this high-cost city. "Santa Fe's a nice place," says local President Mark Daley, "but you can't live on mountains and pine nuts."

TEXAS

Texas Student Education Association members at the University of Houston-Victoria are volunteering to read to children in the local Head Start program and are busy raising funds for a portable Head Start classroom.

Campus TSEA local President Roel Gonzales Padilla reports that the fundraising—including a rubber duck race on the Guadalupe River—has created "growing excitement on campus" and sparked other local projects.

COLORADO

Last spring, Cherry Creek administrators devised a plan to replace a third of their school nurses with health clerks. But Association members stepped in to stop them.

"We wanted to make parents and teachers more outspoken about their desire to keep a qualified nurse in every building," says Will Grant, president of the CCEA. A strong show of support at a spring meeting convinced the school board to hold off on the cuts.

PENNSYLVANIA

Defying a court injunction against privatization of Turner Elementary, the Wilkinsburg school board recently laid off 24 teachers and appropriated $1.1 million to pay a profit-making firm—Alternative Public Schools, Inc.—to run its schools.

Through a media campaign and community outreach, the Pennsylvania Education Association is fighting the APS contract at every turn.

School board members hope Gov. Tom Ridge will come through with a waiver allowing it to privatize the Turner School.

RESOURCES

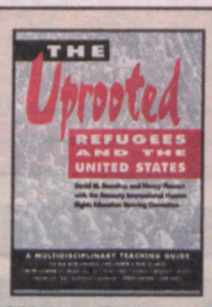
Free or Inexpensive

HANDS-ON LEARNING

Beyond Textbooks: Hands-On Learning. Teachers explain how they involve students by using authentic materials and real-world activities. 96 pp. (#2907-0-00-FF) $9.99 plus p&h. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516. 800/229-4200. FAX 203/933-5276.

MULTI-DISCIPLINE

The Uprooted: Refugees and the United States. David M. Donahue and Nancy Flowers. Hunter House. This teaching guide includes teaching activities and strategies, a bibliography and filmography, a list of refugee organizations, and a copy of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. $20.50 paper, $27.50 spiral-bound, includes s&h. Call 800/266-5592.



PHYSICAL FITNESS

Children's Running: A Guide for Teachers and Coaches. An eight-lesson curriculum designed specifically for elementary school children. Also includes a 20-page booklet, *Children's Running: A Guide for Parents and Kids.* $5. Send a check payable to Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) to Curriculum Guide Program, RRCA, 1150 S. Washington St., Suite 250, Alexandria, VA 22314.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Address Book of Children's Authors and Illustrators. R. Howard Blout, Jr. An elementary language arts teacher from Florida, Blout explains how students can communicate with their favorite authors and illustrators. Includes addresses, biographies, birthdays, photographs, and quotes. For more information or to order this book, call 800/253-5469.

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE

The Kids' Science Book. Children ages 4 to 10 can expand their curiosity and understanding of the world with more than 100 hands-on experiences designed for the kitchen, the playground, and their own backyard. $12.95 plus $2.50 s&h, Williamson Publishing, 800/234-8791.

Leaping Frogs; Bubbles, Bubbles, Everywhere; The Mystery of Magnets. Macmillan Early Science Big Books. Oversized books for pre-K to 6th grade students feature close-up, full-color pictures and easy-to-read text, each with teaching guide. $14.95, includes s&h. Newbridge Educational Publishing, P.O. Box 1876, Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156. 800/867-0307.

ENVIRONMENT

World Forests: Striking a Balance Between Conservation and Development. This classroom guide and activity book for middle school students provides ideas for teaching kids about global interdependence. $7 plus $3 s&h from American Forests, 1516 P St. N.W., Washington, DC 20005. 800/368-5748, ext. 200.

Ecoaction. Tips and activities to help kids reduce waste, save energy, and protect the environment. $12 plus $3 s&h. National Energy Foundation, 5160 Wiley Post Way, Suite 200, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116. 801/539-1406.

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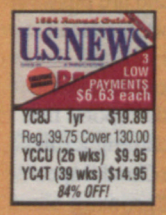

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Cosmopolitan	12	TRT8J	24.97	14.97	PC World	12	PD6A	36.00	19.97
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Ebony	12	FNT6	16.00	11.97	Photographic	12	REEV	19.94	9.97
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Essence	12	QANJ	18.00	14.96	Readers Digest ★	12	XY78	27.00	22.46
Glamour	12	R8C7	15.00	11.97	Redbook	12	AD9Q	14.97	10.00
Golf Digest	12	47WD	27.94	16.77	Rolling Stone	26	4CTQ	25.95	15.97
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Learning	6	FKM6	20.00	14.96	Sports Illustrated	53	CJXP	78.97	39.75
Life	14	49EU	35.00	17.50	Teen	12	W9UT	15.95	13.95
MacUser	12	J9EU	27.00	14.00	Time	52	6KDA	59.94	29.97
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RESOURCES

TV Tips

Ferne Pearlstein

The American Promise—*PBS Sunday-Tuesday, October 1-3, 8-9 p.m. ET.* From a Yosemite mountaintop, where rock climbers debate environmental issues, to a Brooklyn "hood," where two residents found a "hip-hop" bank to invest in the local community, this three-part series highlights grassroots democracy.

Masterpiece Theatre: "The Buccaneers"—*PBS, Sunday-Tuesday, October 8-10, 9 p.m. ET.* American socialites meet British peers in this dramatization of Edith Wharton's final, unfinished novel.

Marsalis on Music— *PBS, Mondays, October 9-30, 8-9 p.m. ET.* This four-part young people's series, conceived and written by 33-year-old trumpet virtuoso Wynton Marsalis, teaches music appreciation.

The Private Life of Plants—*TBS, Monday, October 9, and Tuesday, October 10, 8:05-11:05 p.m. ET.* World-renowned naturalist David Attenborough's six-hour documentary uses the latest advances in film and video technology to look at the world of plants from the viewpoint of the plants themselves.

Big Feats Entertainment

Wishbone—*PBS, Monday, October 9, 4:30-5 p.m. ET.* The half-hour, live-action series, designed primarily for elementary school children between the ages of 6 and 11, uses a dog's adventures in the world of literature to entice children to read.

NOVA: Anastasia Dead or Alive?—*PBS, Tuesday, October 10, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Did the daughter of the last Czar of Russia escape her family's bloody fate and end up living in Charlottesville, Virginia? NOVA presents new evidence about what really happened.

Mr. Spim's Cartoon Theatre: Count of Monte Cristo—*The Cartoon Network, Sunday, October 22, 7:30-8:30. ET.* Edmond Dantes, a young sailor, escapes from prison, assumes the identity of his dead companion, and sets sail to the Isle of Monte Cristo, where he uncovers fabulous treasure.

People—*The Disney Channel, Tuesday, October 24, 7-8 p.m. ET.* Based on Peter Spier's acclaimed book, this animated musical special celebrates the 50th anniversary of the United Nations with original music performed by Al Jarreau, Chaka Khan, and others.

National Geographic Explorer: "Nature's Nightmares"—*TBS, Sundays, 9-10 p.m. ET.* A five-part look at terrifying creatures of nature, including man-eating lions, sharks, sea snakes, saw-scaled vipers, and killer bees.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's radio and television programming.

Ahead on Teacher TV

Looking for some proven classroom strategies? Then tune in to *Teacher TV*, the award-winning weekly magazine-style program coproduced by NEA and The Learning Channel. *Teacher TV* airs Sundays at 12:30 p.m. ET. Here's the schedule:

October 1: Charter Schools
October 8: Cross Age Teaching
October 15: Whole Child, Whole Village
October 22: Economics of Education
October 29: Alternative Assessment

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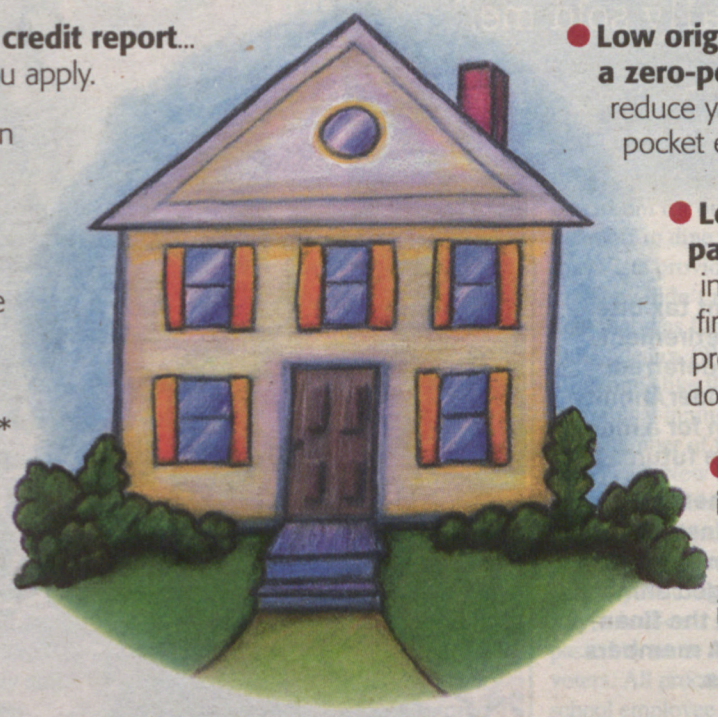

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Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work

More Sense Than Dollars

Photographs by John Ballance

In Westlake, Louisiana, students get extra attention, school employees get a pat on the back, and business partners get birthday cards, cinnamon rolls—and a hand in local schools.

Workers in blue Nomex coveralls and steel-toe boots constantly roam the Westwood Elementary campus in Westlake, Louisiana. They're from Vista Chemical, a local business in this town of petrochemical plants 25 miles from the Texas border.

"Now I look out my door and just expect to see Vista people here," sighs fifth grade teacher Pam Quebodeaux.

And she's thrilled, for Westwood isn't the site of some toxic spill. It's the beneficiary of a creative partnership designed by the Calcasieu Association of Educators that pairs each of the district's 57 schools with at least one local business.

The partnership stresses not dollars, but involvement. With this strategy, businesses like Vista enjoy a close-up view of schools. And now the whole community is rallying behind public education.

Quite a turn for a business community that five years ago considered public education untrustworthy and looked at vouchers as an option.

"Back then, we decided to be part of the solution rather than fight from the outside," explains Sheryl Abshire, a CAE activist.

The 1,600-member CAE started by joining the local Chamber of Commerce as a non-profit member. "Once we started talking to businesses on an individual level, we found that they believe, trust, value, and respect teachers," says Abshire. "It's the bigger picture they mistrusted."

Through the Chamber, CAE formed a Partners in Education Committee to get community businesses more involved in that picture.

"We've asked businesses to invest with us, not in us," says Abshire, the principal of Westwood Elementary. "Sure, money's come when it's available, but it's not the key force."

Vista Chemical, for example, gives employees release time to tutor at-risk kids at Westwood. Participation has been high, with many Vista employees choosing to come before lunch time, so they can work with the kids through lunch and visit.

"Many of our at-risk kids have only one parent—who's struggling," Quebodeaux adds. "The tutors show the kids there's another adult who cares about them. Engineers, clerical staff—all give up their time. They enjoy it as much as the kids do.

"And it helps me," Quebodeaux notes. "With 28 kids, I can't spend 30 minutes with each one reinforcing multiplication tables." Every child tutored has passed the state minimum competency test.

Excited fifth graders now come to Quebodeaux with comments like "I can't wait until Mr. Denny comes"—referring to Vista engineer Dennis Lee. "One boy told me, 'That's not how Mr. Denny does it.' So I asked him to share with the class a new way of learning—this from a child with attention deficit disorder and low skills," says Quebodeaux.

And Vista says employee morale is up. People feel better about the work of the company, the board says. They feel more in touch with "their" school, and they know their contributions are appreciated.

Westlake's 600 students send each of Vista's 500 employees four or five birthday cards they've made themselves. The school choir sings at company functions.

And during Vista Appreciation Week, Westwood cafeteria workers bake 700 cinnamon rolls. A few students then take them to the plant, don miniature versions of the blue coveralls their Vista partners wear, and hand out treats.

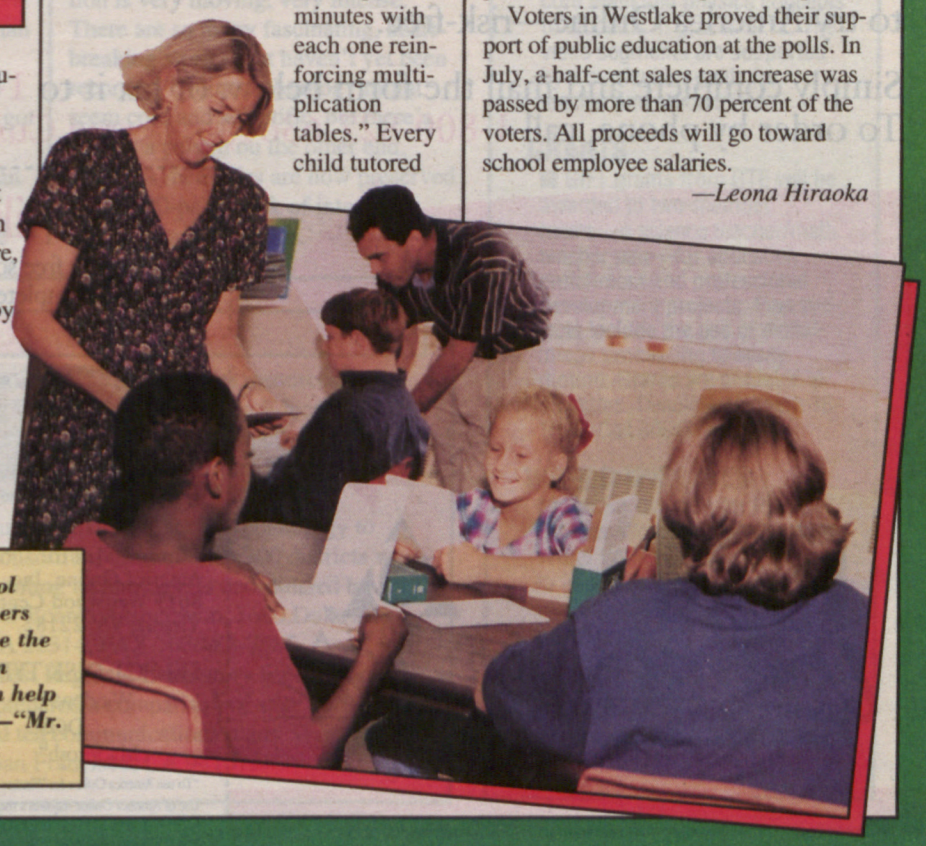
Not to be outdone, Vista shows its appreciation for the teachers. During Teacher Appreciation Week, Vista brought in employees to cover each classroom for one hour while teachers went off to dine together on a lunch that Vista provided.

"They didn't realize what a big deal that was for us," exclaims Quebodeaux. "We never get to meet all at once like that."

In this winning collaboration, even the Chamber of Commerce has come out ahead. New businesses are joining the Chamber so they can participate in the education partnership.

Voters in Westlake proved their support of public education at the polls. In July, a half-cent sales tax increase was passed by more than 70 percent of the voters. All proceeds will go toward school employee salaries.

—Leona Hiraoka



Above, a group of Westlake school employees, students, and volunteers from Vista Chemical stand outside the Vista plant. At right, teacher Pam Quebodeaux gets some classroom help from Vista employee Dennis Lee—"Mr. Denny" to the kids.

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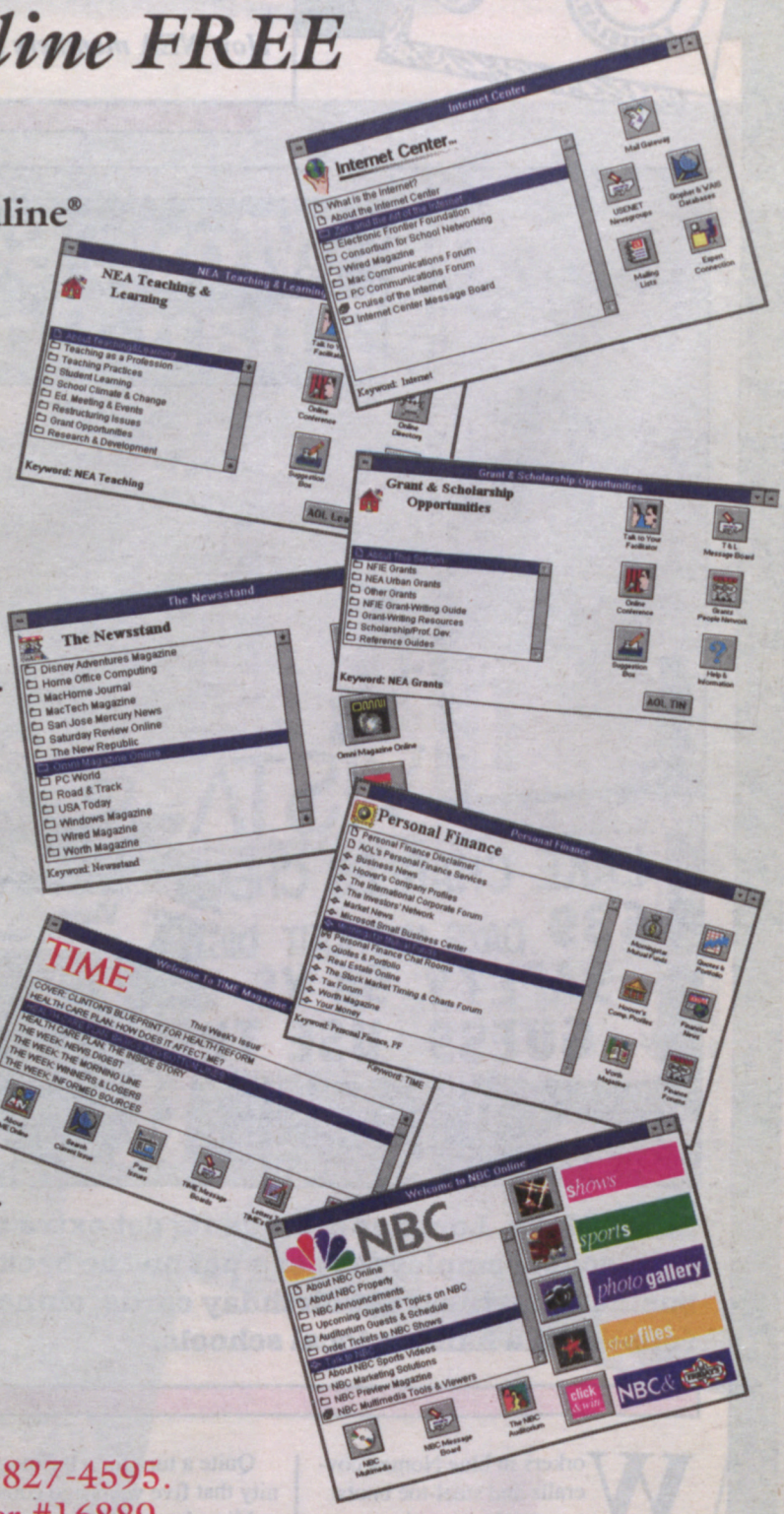

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NEA members using technology to improve education

IN THE CLASSROOM

New Port for War Memoirs

WHO: Ron Adams, seventh grade teacher, Broad Meadows Middle School, Quincy, Massachusetts

E-MAIL ADDRESS: RonA419873@aol.com

WHAT: With only one computer and modem, my 40 seventh graders have contributed a chapter to the history of World War II.

INSPIRATION: Last year, as part of a class project on the war, I asked students to gather memoirs of those who experienced it firsthand. Some students had no one to interview in person, so they posted messages throughout America Online, asking people to contribute accounts of their wartime experiences.

Working in groups of three, the kids sparked memories from veterans and others from 21 states, Canada, England, and Germany.

One veteran wrote to us about his experiences as a B-26 bomber pilot on D-Day, June 6, 1944. He described taking off in the dark and then flying so low over the beaches of Normandy that he could see the faces of Allied soldiers. He remembered seeing soldiers give him the thumbs up as one of his bombs made a direct hit on a German pill box.

"War is not glorious," he wrote to my students online. "One side kills more than the other. All sides lose. The trick is to avoid war. That is the lesson I hope you learn from this project."

One Black veteran who helped liberate Dachau told the kids of an incident that haunts him to this day. He was in a railway station cafeteria on the East Coast, waiting for a train to take him home after three years of war. Startled, he realized that German prisoners of war under guard were only a few feet away. Just then, the waitress spoke out, "Hey, coloreds got to eat outside."

He ate outside, alone. The German prisoners sat at the counter, eating sandwiches and drinking coffee. He wrote of how he'd hoped that the newsreels of the Nazi death camps had somehow ended racism back in the states. In an instant, he realized they hadn't.

CLICK: Online oral history collection is very moving, very intense. There are so many fascinating, heartbreaking stories that haven't yet been recorded. Online technology might seem cold and scientific, but there's always a person on the other end. Priceless memories are now preserved in the 500-page book of interviews that my class compiled.

Steve Szydlowski

Teacher Ron Adams inspired seventh grader Kerri Piccuito (center) to record and preserve the memories of more than 100 women who served on the homefront during World War II. Mary Fisher (left) and Fran Catrabone (right) worked as welders at the shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts.

BYTES FOR BEGINNERS

So you've been asked to serve on your school's technology planning committee but know little about technology?

Just say yes! Why? It's the educational process, not the technology, that needs to drive technology planning. You know your students, the curriculum, and your school's instruction and assessment objectives.

Instead of immersing yourself in technical issues, work on projects like how computers and wiring will be installed to best make use of limited space.

And strong professional development is essential for successful implementation—a point you can make even if you don't know how to click and drag.

If you're really lost, talk to other educators who've been implementing technology. More resources:

- "Plugging in: Choosing and Using Educational Technology" is available from the Council for Educational Development and Research, 2000 L St., N.W., Suite 601, Washington, DC 20036 (46 pages, $5 prepaid).
- The Institute for the Transfer of Technology to Education, a consortium of more than 300 districts working on implementing technology, is coordinated by the National School Boards Association, 1680 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314. FAX 703/683-7585.
- The Far West Regional Laboratory for Educational Research has prepared a comparison of state educational technology and telecommunications plans. Write to 730 Harrison St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

SCHOOL SITE

■ SchoolSite™, a new Internet service dedicated exclusively to the K-12 education market, provides schools with a relatively inexpensive method for presenting information on the graphical World Wide Web. For more information visit http://www.schoolsite.com or write: SchoolSite™ at 5335 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20015-2034; 800/964-7483.

ONLINE MAGAZINE

■ Scholastic's *Electronic Learning* magazine will now appear on a World Wide Web site (http://scholastic.com:2005/). Visit the site to give input about what you'd like to see in the magazine, both online and in print.

NEW HARDWARE

■ A motherboard that enables IBM PS/2s to run as 486-50 meg machines is now available. The motherboard alone costs $295; a package with the motherboard and an additional 4 meg of ram sells for $444. Contact PC Enterprises, 2400 Belmar Blvd., #B16, Wall, NJ 07719; 800/922-7257.

RESOURCES

VIDEO

■ "Sports Figures," ESPN2's newest programming series, utilizes the world of sports to teach core math and physics concepts to students in grades 9-12. The video segments are supported by a curriculum guide for teacher and student use.

GRANTS

■ GIFT grants from GTE will be awarded to two-member teams—a science teacher/math teacher pair—for education enrichment and professional development projects. Past projects include the use of digital-image processing to study motion. Grants are available in 35 states. Deadline: January 16, 1996. Call 800/315-5010.

WORLD WIDE WEB

■ The Corporation for Public Broadcasting's EdWeb Project World Wide Web site has links to information on the use of the Internet in K-12 schools. Topics include: educational networks, exemplary school Internet projects, e-mail addresses of schools with broadband Internet access, and more. Site address: http://k12.cnidr.org:90/.

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NEW FOR 1995

Portfolio Practices: Assessing and Thinking Through Children's Work

Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Educators who don't develop alternatives to traditional examinations risk the ultimate failure of their school reform efforts. You can avoid the pitfalls and backlash that many of your colleagues have experienced by adopting the portfolio practices detailed in this new book. Learn the nuts and bolts of student portfolios, find out how to think about assessment in fresh ways, explore the steps you can take to keep your innovative assessment practices from being stifled, and much more.

160pp. 1995. (1858-3-00-VL) $16.95

Professional Development Schools: Combining School Improvement and Teacher Preparation

Lucindia Chance, Editor

This book outlines a new paradigm of collaboration between public schools and teacher preparation institutions. The goal is better-prepared new teachers, but the ripple reaches virtually every aspect of pre K-12 and college/university practice. Use the real-life experiences from the University of Memphis as the basis for developing your own learning community of professors, teachers, administrators, and prospective teachers to improve teaching and learning.

192 pp. 1995. (1869-9-00-VL) $18.95

Portfolios: Assessing Learning in the Primary Grades

Marianne Lucas Lescher

A classroom teacher gives you her unique perspective on what research says to the teacher about portfolio assessment. Lescher blends an overview of the literature with her own action research findings and suggests strategies for selecting portfolio components, offers tips on innovative uses, and discusses the steps to take if you want to begin using student portfolios.

40pp. 1995. (1094-9-00-VL) $4.95

Moving Toward an Integrated Curriculum in Early Childhood Education

Dianne Lawler-Prince, Jennifer L. Altieri, and Mary Kay Cramer

If you need realistic, practical ideas to help integrate the curriculum through thematic teaching, you will find them in this new book. Sample thematic units and webs that you can use as a springboard for your own creativity and an annotated bibliography give you additional tools to make learning meaningful, real, and relevant for your students.

128pp. 1995. (0367-5-00-VL) $14.95

Inspiring Discipline: A Practical Guide for Today's Classrooms

Merrill Harmin

This valuable resource for both new and experienced teachers puts the best of modern theory and research in a form that works for real teachers in real classrooms. The knowledge contained in this book will enable all teachers to develop a broad base of behavior management strategies and promote positive, well-managed learning environments.

128pp. 1995. (2950-X-00-VL) $12.95

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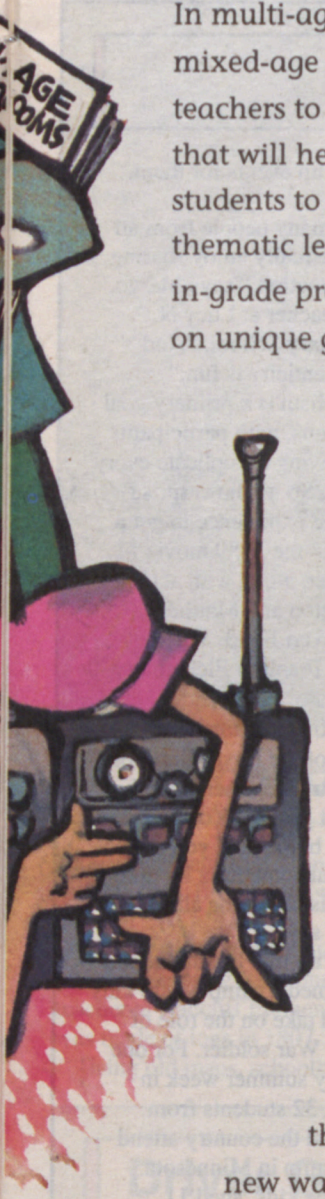
Multi-Age Classrooms

In multi-age classrooms—ungraded schools, family areas, and other mixed-age groupings—the richness of the learning environment compels teachers to innovate. We've collected six stories from real classrooms that will help your team: inspire older students to be mentors, teach integrated thematic lessons, eliminate retention in-grade problems, and capitalize on unique group dynamics to enhance student learning.

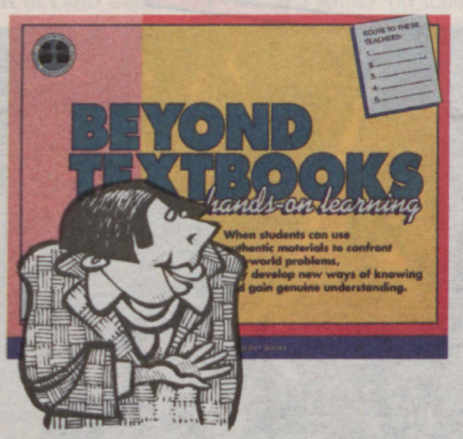
96pp. 1995.
(2907-0-00-VL) $9.95



Beyond Textbooks: Hands-On Learning

The six lively learning environments presented here are teacher-created examples of ways you can exploit authentic material and real-world activities to connect students to the community beyond your classroom walls. Use these stories as a basis for developing your own innovative projects that will give your students new ways of knowing and a genuine understanding of what you teach.

96pp. 1995. (2906-2-00-VL) $9.95



Student Portfolios

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96pp. 1993. (2901-1-00-VL) $9.95

Toward Inclusive Classrooms

Six approaches written by teachers who have been there. Read how they successfully integrate students with special needs into their classrooms and school-wide activities.
96pp. 1994. (2903-8-00-VL) $9.95

Innovative Discipline

Teachers talk about new discipline strategies that can improve the whole culture of your school.
96pp. 1994. (2904-6-00-VL) $9.95

School-Based Change

Six stories from your colleagues on how they are dealing with the many challenges that accompany shared decision-making (e.g., how to handle faculty and community resistance, time constraints, and determining desired outcomes). There's a special emphasis on the importance of successful group decision-making in school-change efforts.
96pp. 1994. (2905-4-00-VL) $9.95

Time Strategies

Educators at all levels acknowledge that curriculum and time periods don't match. The innovators who share their stories in this book tell you why and how they have taken charge of the clock and increased learning, planning time, team meeting time, and more.
96pp. 1994. (2902-X-00-VL) $9.95

COMING SOON

- **Integrated Thematic Teaching**
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Copyright Primer for Librarians and Educators, 2nd Edition

Janis H. Bruwelheide

The subject of copyright law with all its shades of gray is of special concern to educators and librarians and a lot has changed since we published the first edition of this primer. The new edition will guide you in exercising your legal rights to the fullest and help you avoid potentially costly problems. The Q & A format provides answers to questions ranging from "what are the penalties for infringement?" to "is it fair use to tape a TV show for classroom use?" to "how does copyright protection apply to the Internet?"
160pp. 1995. (1870-2-10-VL)
Regular price: $22.00.
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Journey to School Reform: Moving from Reflection to Action through StoryTelling

David K. Wallace, Editor

After working through this guide you will understand how to anchor school reform in reflection and action, how to facilitate the storytelling process, and how the process works in a variety of settings, with diverse voices in the school community. Also included is The Process Guide, which puts it all together by giving you specific forum topics and insights from school leaders who have made the journey before you.
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People

Richard Nowitz

'Glory' Days

From Bull Run to Gettysburg, battles are breaking out all over the country. Why? Civil War reenactment groups are busy recreating history, and teachers are busy making history come alive for their students.

Margo and **Tony Daniels** (top photo) participate in about 20 reenactment events each year, including an annual drive to Gettysburg to participate in a recreation of the monumental 1863 battle (pictured below). Both are among the 60-plus members of the Third New Jersey, a reenactment group.

"I've always loved the Civil War because it's so dynamic," says Tony, who was hooked 13 years ago by a reenactor he met in a K-Mart check-out line.

He shares his enthusiasm with his eighth-grade history classes at Goetz Intermediate School in Jackson, New Jersey. "I'll bring in weapons and artifacts to show the kids, and set up events for them," he explains.

"We meet so many people from all walks of life. We really enjoy sharing stories and information," says Margo, a kindergarten teacher at Lucy N. Holman Elementary School. "And working on authenticity is fun."

Achieving realism is a primary goal at battle recreations, with participants meticulously striving to replicate every Civil War detail. So it's no surprise that Tony had the experience to get a role as an extra in the 1989 movie *Glory*. On that set, along with actors Denzel Washington and Matthew Broderick, was **Arn Kind**, a sixth grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School in Mankato, Minnesota.

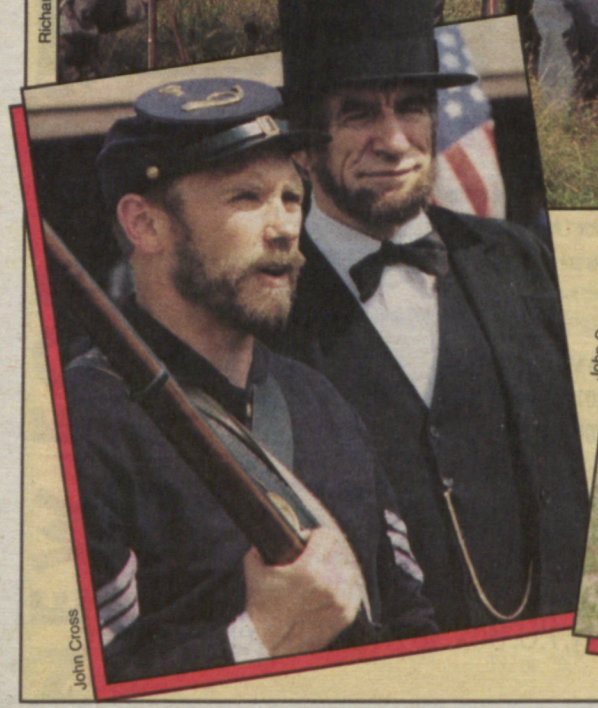
Since 1982, Kind (bottom left) has been a member of the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment, another war reenactment group. "You can read about history in books, but you can really learn about something by making history come alive," Kind says.

With that in mind, Kind designed a camp where kids could take on the role of Civil War soldier. For one balmy summer week in June, 32 students from around the country attend the camp in Minnesota.

The kids, aged 11 through 16, carry wooden muskets and wear replica uniforms as they practice military drills and marches. They sleep in old army barracks and sample soldiers' cuisine—pork and hard-boiled eggs. Classroom presentations explain the war's causes and participants. As the students prepare to return to the 1990s, President Abraham Lincoln, played by another reenactor, congratulates them on their outstanding service.

"I really think the kids come away with a greater understanding of the Civil War," Kind says, "and of what it was like to be a common person living through that turbulent time."

Richard Nowitz


John Cross

John Cross

Ty Greenlees

School Days of Years Past

Larry and **Debbie Helton** are too young to remember the days of the one-room schoolhouse. But they're wise enough to recognize them as a vital part of Ohio's educational past.

"We've spent just about every Saturday since 1993 traveling around the state taking photos, recording locations, and researching the history of these schools," says Larry, a teacher at Radcliff Elementary in Jefferson Township. "The oldest one we've found was made of logs in 1807."

Using old maps, schoolbooks, and local historical records, Larry and his wife, Debbie, an elementary school teacher at Middletown's Wilson Elementary, have located some 700 schoolhouses, "Some are now barns, one houses pigs, others are stores and pizza parlors," says Larry. "One is owned by a woman who attended the school as a child." And some, like the Hughes School No. 4 in Hughes Station (pictured above), have been preserved.

The Heltons, founders of the Society for the Preservation of Ohio One-Room Schools, have become a gold mine for local historical societies. "And schools aren't our only hobby," says Debbie. "Just ask us about grist mills, covered bridges, train depots, and round barns."

Driver Gets Poetic License

Lila Knight, a special ed bus driver in Gwinnett County, Georgia, doesn't twiddle her thumbs at red lights. She writes poetry. "If I don't write my thoughts down as soon as they come along, I'll forget them," says Knight.

Others won't—now that they're in print. Knight's poetry has recently been published in two National Library of Poetry anthologies, *River of Dreams* and *The Best of the '90s*.

"I was thrilled to pieces at being published," says Knight. "When I saw my poem in print, I was walking on air. I would carry that big book around every day, but it's too heavy."

The subjects of Knight's poems can be just as weighty—relationships, religion, death. "I try to write about the happy part of death," she says, "that we're just passing into another part of life."

Knight crafts and sells plaques that feature her first published poem. Business is booming. "I've always been busy," says Knight, who once worked five part-time jobs to support her five children and put herself through school. "I don't enjoy life any other way."

Johnny Crawford

Michelle Litvin

Trust 'Destiny'

Helen Randall isn't one to leave young people's futures to fate. She'd rather trust them to Destiny.

Six years ago, she helped create Destiny, a mentoring program for at-risk girls from Chicago's South Side. "I live and work in an area where kids have major problems," says Randall, a counselor in Harvey, Illinois. "We needed to do something."

Randall served as tutor, role model, and pal, taking the girls to events such as the Ebony Fashion Show. Some girls have gone on to college. Some couldn't surmount their obstacles. "We now feel that seventh grade is a little too late," Randall notes. "We need to start with them in the fourth grade."

While taking a year to work out these plans, Randall is serving as a mentor to area boys. "Teaching where I do, you get used to kids not coming back. You just learn to pick up the next child and start again. To help one child would make such a difference."

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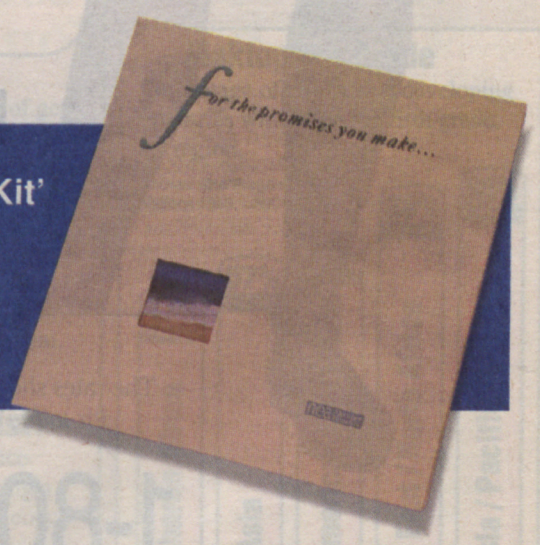

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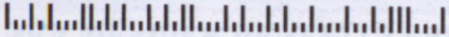

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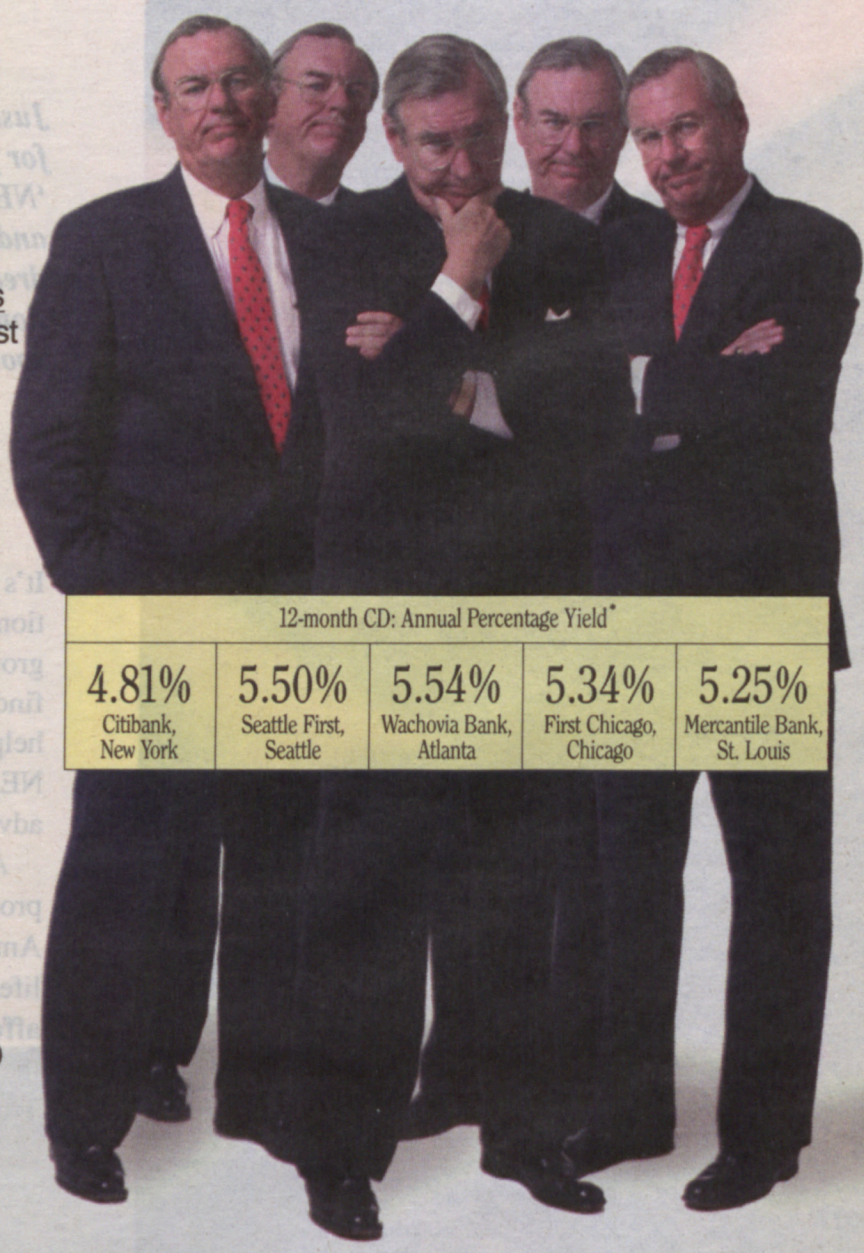

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TCD105

Trends

Behind the Learning Curve

TRUE OR FALSE

1. Mental retardation and emotional problems are forms of learning disabilities.
2. Dyslexia and attention deficit disorder are forms of learning disabilities.
3. People with learning disabilities are of average to above-average intelligence.
Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. True.

If you got all these right, you're exceptional. According to a recent study by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, most Americans have the wrong idea about learning disabilities—60 to 85 percent answered true to question 1.

So it's no wonder that 44 percent of adults with learning disabilities say they were treated less than equally when they were in school. More dismaying is that parents of children with learning disabilities say that things are only slightly better now—38 percent say their kids are not treated equally.

The sad fallout: 35 percent of learning disabled kids drop out of school, twice the rate of children without disabilities.

Bang for the Buck

Public television costs a family of four just $4.35 a year, quite a deal considering the U.S. defense budget costs that same family about $4,350. Public TV seems an even better bargain in light of a recent University of Kansas study that found preschoolers who watched children's educational programming spent more time reading, were better prepared for school, and performed above average on verbal and math tests. Those who primarily watched adult shows and non-educational cartoons did worse than expected on these same tests.

That's a big return on a relatively small congressional investment.

New Look at Rating Xers

Coming soon to a classroom near you: Generation Xers. Though many are fresh out of school, twentysomethings are rapidly returning—as parents.

Forty-five million Americans fall between the ages of 19 and 30, and 44 percent of them already have children of their own. Is this group—generally targeted as an aimless, self-absorbed bunch—prepared for parenthood?

Experts point to encouraging signs. According to Paul Loeb, author of *Generation at the Crossroad*, Generation Xers marry later than earlier generations and want stable relationships and steady incomes before taking any chances—hardly irresponsible behavior.

Neil Howe, whose book *13th-GEN: Abort, Retry, Ignore, Fail?* studies the trials and tribulations of this age group, believes the new wave of parents will try to shroud their children in innocence.

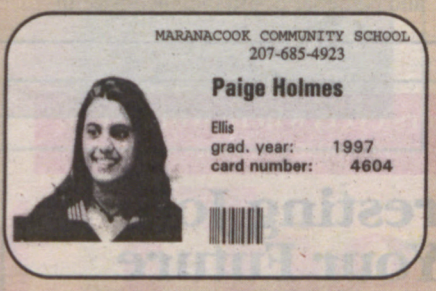
About 40 percent of twentysomethings suffered through their own parents' divorces and, still smarting, are eager to create carefree worlds for their own kids.

Will those raised on MTV and microwave dinners successfully make the leap from Pac-Man to parenthood? You be the judge.

Maybe They're Hungry

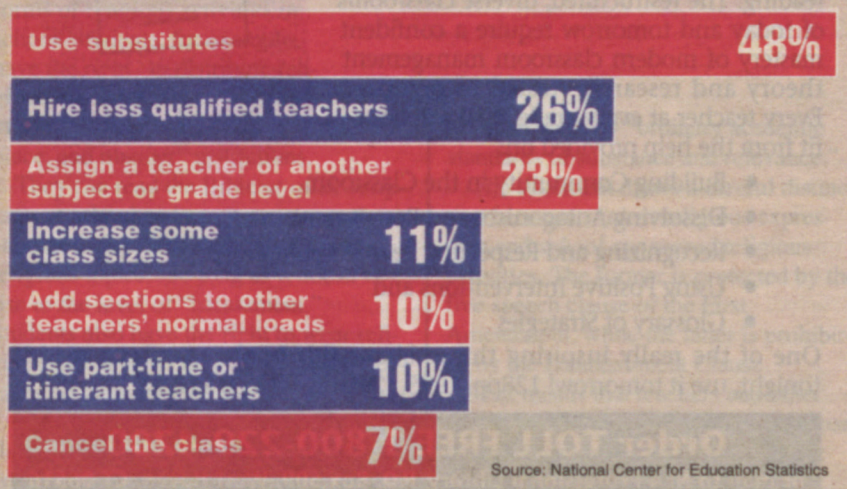
Those who think the poor are all too cavalier about receiving aid should take a look at Maine's Maranacook Community School, where students range from needy to affluent.

Apparently many kids there had been going hungry to avoid the stigma of getting a subsidized meal. So last year, the school began issuing virtually identical meal cards (see above) to all kids, making it difficult to single out who's getting a free or reduced-price meal.

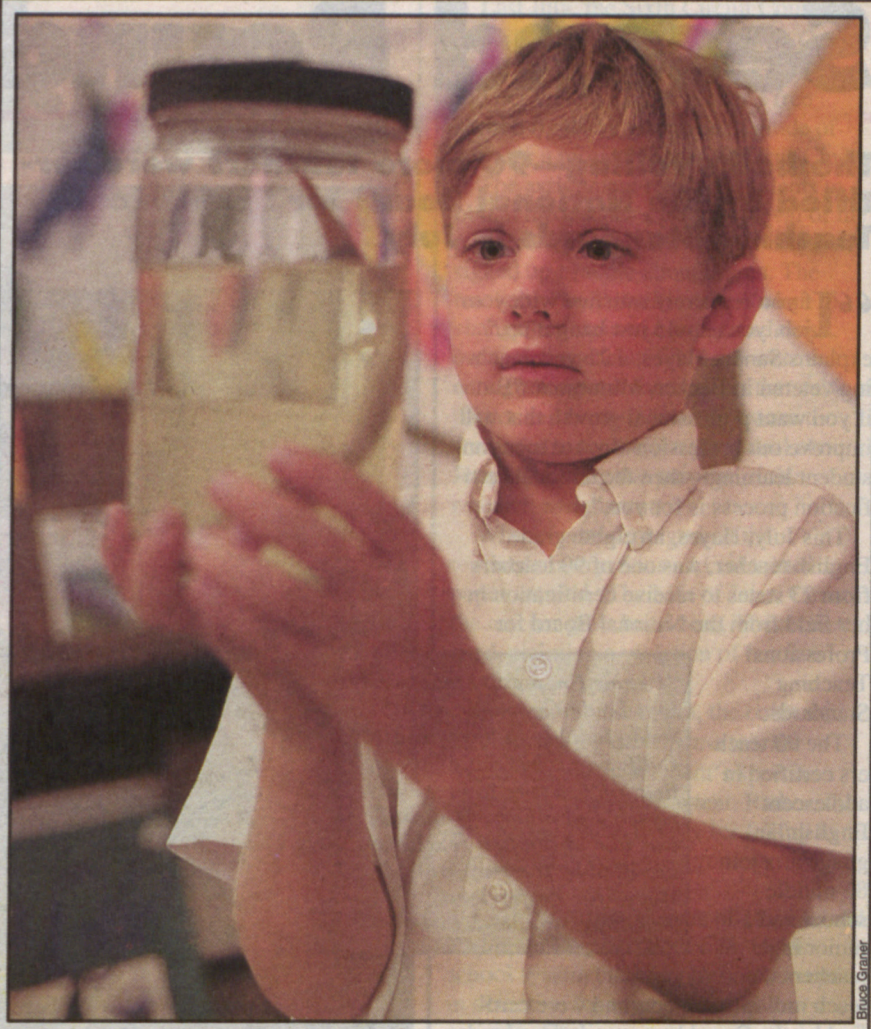


In the program's first year, the school saw a 50 percent increase in the number of qualified kids who got the free meal. Freeloaders? Or just hungry kids?

How Schools Compensate for Teacher Shortages:


Use substitutes 48%
Hire less qualified teachers 26%
Assign a teacher of another subject or grade level 23%
Increase some class sizes 11%
Add sections to other teachers' normal loads 10%
Use part-time or itinerant teachers 10%
Cancel the class 7%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics



Bruce Griner

In 1982 "A Nation at Risk" urged a greater focus on the sciences. The result? In 1982, 78.7 percent of high school graduates had taken biology; in 1992, 93 percent had. For chemistry, the numbers rose from 31.6 percent to 55.5 percent. And more children, like the boy above, are being introduced to creative approaches to science at an earlier age.

Tight Around the Waist?

A recent U.S. Public Health Service report indicates that we're becoming a nation divided into exercisers and couch potatoes.

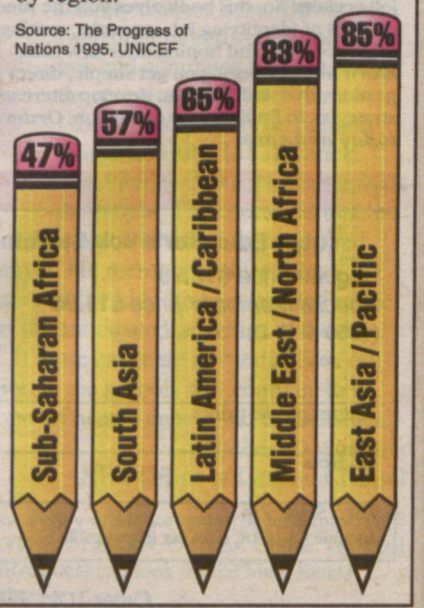
In 1990, the Health Service set national health goals for the year 2000. Its midterm report card shows improvement for some Americans. In 1990, 22 percent exercised regularly; 24 percent do so today (the target is 30 percent by 2000). Plus, the percentage of people consuming high-fat diets has dropped.

But 25 to 30 percent of Americans don't engage in any exercise at all, and another 25 to 30 percent do very little. What's more, the percentage of people who are fat has ballooned—from 26 percent in 1980 to 34 percent today.

Making the Grade

Percentage of children in developing countries who reach the fifth grade, by region.

Source: The Progress of Nations 1995, UNICEF



IN THE CLASSROOM

Certification's Second Round

The ball's rolling—90 more teachers were certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in July.

"If you're merely satisfied with your job, you should just hang it up," explains Sandra Hayes, a 22-year teaching veteran in Becker, Minnesota. "But if you want professional growth that will improve our profession—not to mention student learning—then the national certification process is for you."

This July, Hayes, an eighth grade English teacher, was one of 90 teachers from 23 states to receive certification in her field from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The 90 teachers certified in adolescent English/language arts join 81 middle school and junior high teachers who teach multiple subjects and were certified by the Board last year during the first field test of National Board assessments.

The 171 teachers are now the first to be recognized by a panel of their peers as "board certified"—a seal of approval that once belonged only to doctors and lawyers.

Chris Crewell

"I know I'm a good teacher," says Linda Gonzalez, a sixth grade teacher in Sacramento, California, "but national certification is a way to prove it to myself and others." Gonzalez was one of the first teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards last year.

"Through this process, our profession has found a way to recognize accomplished teaching," says NEA President—and National Board member—Keith Geiger. "That's an important phase in the continuum of teacher development and progression of high standards not just for new but also for experienced teachers."

To be certified, teachers were required to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge and skills through an extensive series of performance-based assessments, including student portfolios, videotapes, interviews, and essays.

"We spent an entire semester completing the portfolios and preparing for interviews," Hayes notes.

The candidates also went to an assessment center to complete exercises demonstrating knowledge of their subjects as well as defend the instructional decisions recorded in their videos.

Who judged the performances? Middle and junior high school English and language arts teachers were trained to make assessments according to criteria set up by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

"What attracted me was that the Board wasn't just another proponent of a specific methodology as the be-all and end-all of teaching," says Kathleen Reeves, a ninth grade English teacher at Seaholm High School in Birmingham, Michigan.

"Skilled teachers know a variety of methods and they tailor those methods to the students in each classroom," Reeves continues. "Board certification recognizes and validates the work that I do in the classroom and the collaborative efforts I make with my colleagues."

And that's not all, adds Minnesota's Hayes. "This process, whether you receive national certification or not, is bound to deepen your knowledge and skills. You model excellent methods, and concentrate on more reflective and collaborative work. That's bound to help teachers make more professional decisions and create better learning opportunities for kids."

This year, the Board will continue its field testing, concentrating on math and art for adolescents and young adults, while at the same time enabling early childhood and middle school teachers to pursue national certification.

"All of this is helping our profession and changing the way teachers are regarded," Reeves says. "It's about time we achieved the status we deserve."

—Anita Merina

F.Y.I.

➤ For more information about national certification, call 800/22TEACH.

➤ Want to discuss national certification with colleagues? Check out NEA Online, the Association's electronic network. Keyword: NEA Teaching, click the "Teaching & Learning Message Board" icon, then select the "National Certification" topic area.

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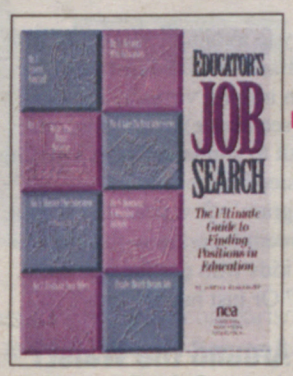

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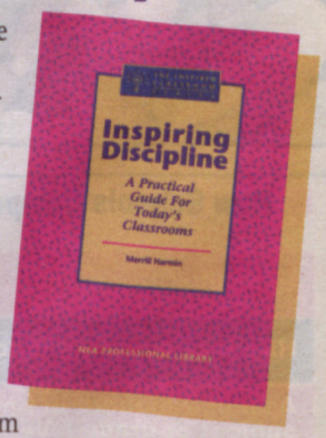

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Legal

Prayer In Schools:

What The Law Allows

Declaring that the First Amendment "does not convert our schools into religion-free zones," President Clinton last July released a comprehensive statement of principles, spelling out what student religious activities are permissible in the public schools.

Although the President's statement does not have the force of law, it is intended to summarize court holdings on religion in the schools. Copies of the statement were sent to all 15,000 public school districts in the country.

While the statement is somewhat ambiguous and leaves several tough questions unanswered, it broadly affirms the right of students to engage in religious expression during the school day.

The statement takes the position that, since students have the right to "free speech" in school, then "private religious expression" by students cannot be banned simply because it is religious. In short, if students are "not engaged in school activities or instruction," and are otherwise permitted to talk among themselves, then they have the right to say prayers or discuss their religious beliefs.

The statement advises that "in informal settings, such as cafeterias and hallways," students can "pray and discuss their religious views with each other, subject to the same rules of order as apply to other student activities and speech." This includes meeting with other students for "group prayer," saying "grace before meals," and praying "before tests."

By the same token, however, "the right to engage in voluntary prayer . . . does not include the right to have a captive audience listen or to compel other students to participate."

But the devil's in the details. Does that mean that students can pray out loud during homeroom, study hall, or in class before instruction has begun? Wouldn't that "compel" a "captive audience" of other students to "listen" to prayer?

The statement of principles doesn't answer that tough question, and the courts have yet to consider such a case.

The statement also provides advice about the legality of other forms of religious activities in school. Students, for example, have the right "to distribute religious literature to their schoolmates," subject to reasonable "time, place, and manner" restrictions.

They can read the Bible or other scriptures at school and can "speak to and attempt to persuade their peers about religious topics," so long as it doesn't rise to the level of "harassment." Students also have the right to wear religious garb and to "display religious messages on items of clothing."

Students can "express their beliefs about religion" in homework and other assignments. And teachers should evaluate such work by "ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance."

The statement draws a careful distinction between *student* religious expression and *school-sponsored* religious activities. The former is protected by the free speech clause of the First Amendment, while the latter is prohibited by the Establishment Clause.

That means that teachers and other school officials cannot encourage or participate in religious activities while at school. At the same time, schools can teach about religion, including "the Bible-as-literature," the role of religion in history, and religious influences on art, music, literature, and social studies.

In a message to administrators, Education Secretary Richard Riley cautions that "[i]mplementation of these principles, of course, will depend on specific factual contexts and will require careful consideration in particular cases."

That's an understatement. Several lawsuits show how tricky it can be to apply these principles in the "real world."

Last July, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals held in *Settle v. Dickson County School Board* that a Tennessee teacher did not violate a ninth grader's free speech rights by giving her a grade of zero for a research paper on Jesus Christ.

The assignment required students to obtain the teacher's prior approval of the research topic, and the student originally signed up to write about drama. The teacher refused to allow the student to change her topic to a paper on Jesus, because the teacher felt there were not enough "original sources" on that subject matter and because she was aware the student already knew a great deal about Jesus, defeating the purpose of the research assignment.

When the student ignored the teacher's instructions and submitted a paper entitled "The Life of Jesus Christ," the teacher gave her a zero. The student sued, claiming a violation of her free speech rights.

In rejecting that claim, the court said this was not a case where a teacher sought to punish a student's speech because of religious content. Rather, the student got a zero simply for failing to comply with a class assignment.

Last year, the parents of 10-year-old Raymond Raines sued the St. Louis school system claiming he had been put in detention for saying grace in the school cafeteria.

School officials have denied that the fourth grader's prayers had anything to do with the punishment. According to Superintendent David Mahan, "He was disciplined for some matters that were totally independent of silent praying." The case is still pending in federal court.

President Clinton's statement of principles doesn't address whether a state-mandated moment of silence is legal, but a federal court in Georgia recently upheld that state's law.

Enacted in 1994, the statute requires every public school teacher to conduct "a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than 60 seconds" at the beginning of each school day. Gwinnett County teacher Brian Bown was fired after he refused to obey the law and continued to teach during the moment of silence.

Bown sued, but in an opinion issued last July, U.S. District Court Judge Frank M. Hull upheld the statute. The court said that the act does not promote state-sponsored prayer, but merely provides for a moment for kids "to be silent and reflect on the anticipated activities of the day."

If these cases are any indication, religion in the schools will continue to be topic of heated debate and court battles.

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

For a copy of the statement of principles, call 800/USA-LEARN. On NEA Online, keyword NEA Local and look for the Must Reads Library.

RESEARCH CLUES

Small Classes, Big Results

You've known the truth for years: Students learn better in smaller classes. Now a crucial new study backs you up.

A decade-long study conducted by the Tennessee State Department of Education concludes that children learn best when class sizes are small.

Analysts have worked for nearly 10 years on the Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio project, or Project STAR, at Tennessee State University's Center for Excellence. Their conclusions are music to the ears of most educators.

"Kids from all geographic areas benefit tremendously from being in small classes during the early grades," says Barbara Nye, executive director at the Center for Excellence. "Not only that, young kids in smaller classes continue to benefit academically for many years afterwards."

Project STAR is unique in its sheer size and scope. From 1985, when the project began, until 1989, researchers closely monitored more than 6,000 kids in 79 schools in Tennessee.

"This is the only study of its kind in the world," Nye says. "We had a huge sample of kids whom we watched over a period of years."

At each school, children in grades K-3 were randomly put into three groups—small groups with 13-16 students per teacher, "regular" groups with 22-25 students per teacher, and "regular" groups with 22-25 students per teacher and full-time classroom aide.

Because each school contained classes of all three types at the appropriate grade level, variations caused by school effects were reduced.

The results: At every grade level, in every subject, at rural, suburban, and urban schools, children in small classes outperformed their peers on standardized tests every time. The facts:

➤ Students in small classes scored in the 61st percentile on the reading section of the Stanford Achievement Test—eight points higher than their counterparts in regular-sized classes.

➤ Students in small classes scored in the 69th percentile in math—a seven-point advantage over the other kids.

➤ The presence of full-time teacher aides resulted in modest student improvement—but gains were far less than those achieved in the small classes.

➤ Even over time, the benefits held up. In 1992-93, researchers checked up on many of the students they had tracked for Project STAR. This follow-up work, known as the Lasting Benefits Study, found those who had spent time in small classes were still ahead of their peers.

"The second phase of the study really solidified everything," Nye says.

Now, the real challenge begins—convincing school boards and lawmakers that small class size is a key to educational success. So far, 17 school districts in Tennessee have responded to Project STAR by reducing K-3 class sizes.

Many are wary, however, of implementing similar programs. One problem, Nye says, is that while many people acknowledge the benefit of small classes, they are reluctant to spend money on reducing teacher-student ratios.

"Fact is, spending an extra $1,500 per pupil to have small classes is a lot more cost-effective than spending thousands on retention and remedial education," Nye reasons. "Smaller classes will cost less in the long run because you'll have fewer kids achieving at low levels."

—Noah Lang

F.Y.I.

➤ For a copy of the Project STAR report, write to the Center of Excellence, Box 141, Tennessee State University, 330 10th Ave. North, Nashville, TN 37203.

➤ Or get a copy through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Call 800/538-3742 to find the ERIC microfiche collection nearest you. To order a printed copy of the Project STAR report (order no. ED328356) or the Lasting Benefits Study (order no. ED354992) call 800/443-3742.

➤ To order an NEA Readings in Educational Research notebook on class size, send a $20 check, made payable to the National Education Association, to Readings-RER, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. All orders must be prepaid. For more information, write to June Vanderveen at NEA headquarters.

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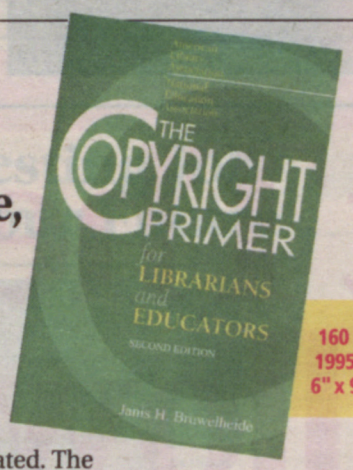

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Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students lea

Milton Tenenbein, M.D., is a professor of pediatrics, pharmacology, and community health at the University of Manitoba, director of emergency services at Winnipeg Children's Hospital, and director of the Manitoba Poison Control Center. He has two decades of experience researching and treating inhalant abuse and is directing the work of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Substance Abuse in this area.

DEADLY WEAPONS?

A medical expert calls "inhalant abuse" a silent—and deadly—epidemic.

Is "inhalant abuse" a new term for kids sniffing model airplane glue?
Back in the 1950s, glue sniffing was the prevalent form of inhalant abuse. Today tens of thousands of readily available household items are abused by people who inhale them to get high.

I could walk you through a supermarket or hardware store and in 10 minutes load up a shopping cart with a hundred such items—everything from paint solvents, gasoline, and butane, to correction fluid and felt markers. Also, anything in an aerosol can—from paint to deodorant and whipped cream—can be abused in this way.

How extensive is the problem among students?
Yearly studies done by the University of Michigan document that 16 to 18 percent of graduating high school seniors have used inhalants at least once. Because this leaves out all the students who do not get that far in school, it greatly underestimates the scope of the problem. While the problem is more prevalent among the poor and disadvantaged, don't think for a moment that it's not a problem for middle class kids, too.

We're talking here about a silent epidemic that starts with children as young as five or six using things that are inexpensive and easy to get. Younger children are much more likely to experiment with inhalants before they try other substances.

How dangerous is a single "experiment" by a student?
People are as likely to die the first time they use an inhalant as they are through repeated use—and it has nothing to do with an overdose. There may be as many as 500 deaths per year from inhalants in the United States. Dangerous, under-the-influence behavior, choking, and suffocation (through use of a plastic bag for inhaling) each account for about 15 percent of deaths from inhalant abuse.

What about the rest?
The other 55 percent are caused by sudden sniffing death syndrome. It usually occurs when the inhalant abuser is confronted by an authority figure. This causes an adrenalin rush, and because all solvents make the heart more sensitive to adrenalin, it can cause irregular and uncontrollable ventricular fibrillation and death.

How should school personnel and parents act when they discover a child using an inhalant?
The situation requires a cool and measured response rather than confrontation. Most of the time, nothing will happen, but obviously the consequences are so extreme in a small percentage of situations that great care must be taken.

What are the long-term dangers of solvent abuse?
All of the inhalants are hydrocarbons, or solvents, that can vaporize easily and be absorbed by the brain to induce the desired altered state of being. All of them will cause brain damage.

It's not a question of *if*—only of how long it will take for each individual. Long-term effects are irreversible cognitive impairment, loss of coordination (staggering around permanently like one is drunk), and shaking. Depending on the solvents used, there's also damage to the kidneys, liver, and lungs.

Are inhalants addictive?
Some people dispute this, but I strongly believe that inhalants are addictive—not as powerfully as cocaine or nicotine, but still addictive. Some of the signs of withdrawal include irritability, tremors, sweating, and cognitive dysfunctions.

Can a school employee tell if a student has a problem?
It can be difficult, because there are so many products that can be used. In addition, some things, like correction fluid or felt-tipped markers are normally carried by students. But watch out for chemical odors on the breath, stains from the solvents on nostrils or clothing, and deviation from the usual behavior of the student. The carrying of unusual amounts of products or carrying out-of-place products (like a can of whipped cream) also are red flags.

How important is education on inhalant abuse?
It's the most important thing we can do, and it gives us the greatest bang for our buck. Prevention is much more effective than treatment programs. We have to begin in preschool and kindergarten talking about inhalants as poisons, with developmentally appropriate modules for each age group.

Frankly, it's too late if you start by showing a video to a 13-year-old already into it who knows 100 other kids using inhalants. It won't work. Peer pressure will be too strong.

Training school personnel on the overall problem of inhalant abuse, the warning signs, and how to be sensitive to the various aspects of the problem is also crucial.

Resources

For more information contact:
➤ Coalition Against Inhalant Abuse/Texas Prevention Partnership, 800/269-4237, which has a referral service, model school curriculums, and a variety of free and low-cost resources including a basic information packet, videos for students and adults, posters, and a school/community campaign coordinators kit.
➤ Eden Youth Project, 612/874-9441, which produces "All About Inhalants," a free booklet in Spanish and English for elementary school children.
➤ BOCES/NYS Department of Education, 914/248-2454, which provides resource materials for school programs.

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Money

Mutual Fund Madness

It's hard enough to pick a shampoo. How're you going to select a mutual fund with 8,000 to choose from?

The dizzying array of mutual funds available today can intimidate even sophisticated investors. Last year, 2,000 new mutual funds were introduced, bringing the total to more than 8,000 funds.

Don't despair, even if you're a novice investor. It's still possible to start with as little as $100 and begin with just one fund, if that's all you can afford.

First you must sort through the terminology. The terms "load" and "no-load," which intimidated me when I first started investing, have become largely meaningless today.

The term "load" was once used to refer to a fund sold by a broker who got a commission. A "no-load" fund was sold directly, without a commission.

But that distinction has become blurred. Today, many load funds spread the broker's commission over a number of years. That means you pay it gradually rather than shelling out an up-front fee. And many former no-load groups, most notably Fidelity Investments, tack up-front loads onto their funds, even though they offer no advice.

So how should you choose between the two? For one thing, you can eliminate performance as part of your decision making process. Any number of studies have shown that there's no difference in performance between the two groups.

Morningstar Mutual Funds compared load and no-load funds in a study conducted in mid-1995. Not surprisingly, the study found that load funds had higher annual expenses—1.62 percent of assets, compared with 1.11 percent for no-load funds.

Load funds, on average, also invested more aggressively. And, as expected, when performance was adjusted for the load, load funds trailed in performance in the early years. Here are the results, with the performance of the load funds adjusted to take the commission into account:

	No-Load Funds	Load Adjusted
1 year	14.05	8.77
3 year	10.90	8.83
5 year	10.78	9.83
10 year	12.13	12.14

It seems clear that no-load funds are a better option for investors who can do their own research. And that's not as difficult as you might think.

Start by putting together a list of funds, paying attention to the asset classes—or the types of securities—each fund buys and to its management style. Ignore what the fund calls itself.

Most investors should have at least one fund that invests in large U.S. companies. These stocks had a tremendous runup in the first half of this year when the Standard & Poor's Index of 500 stocks gained more than 20 percent.

If you have sufficient assets, you should divide them between a manager who uses a value approach to picking stocks and one who uses a growth approach.

Value managers look for undervalued securities. Growth managers look for companies on the fast track, hoping that earning growth will send stock prices soaring. These two management styles perform well in different investment environments.

But if you're just starting out as a mutual fund investor, you'll probably want to start with just one fund. Although investment pros say you need three to five funds to diversify properly, everyone must start somewhere.

Even the most intrepid fans of diversification, like Harold Evensky, an investment adviser in Coral Gables, Florida, admit that on occasion they'll recommend a one-fund portfolio.

"There are times when people really don't have the resources to set up a diversified portfolio," Evensky acknowledges. "To tell them they can't invest until they're rich is pretty lousy. We don't want them to just shove their money in the mattress."

There are three types of funds that experts recommend for beginners. The first is a balanced fund, which invests in both stocks and bonds, typically with 60 percent in stocks and 40 percent in bonds.

"We think people should own more than one fund," says A. Michael Lipper, president of Lipper Analytical Services Inc. "But if you think of your first fund as a starter kit, a balanced fund is a good option. It gives you exposure to both stock and bond markets. It's a good training wheel."

One of the oldest funds in this group, and the choice of Jonathan Pond, a Boston financial planner and author of *The Money Book*, is the Vanguard Wellington Fund.

The second type of fund to consider is an index fund that tracks the S&P 500. Index funds have low expenses, because there's no need for management. That also makes them a good fund for beginners because there's no manager to monitor.

"With your first fund, you'll want to stake out the main territory—or to buy America—and that means the Standard & Poor's 500 index," Evensky says. "It gives direct ownership in the domestic equity market, and you're not depending on one manager whose style may change or may leave when you're not paying attention."

The third choice for a one-fund portfolio is a global asset allocation fund. The upside is that you get stocks, bonds, real estate, gold, and other securities around the world, providing a truly balanced portfolio. The downside is that virtually none has been able to make a good job of such a complex task.

The outstanding exception is SoGen International, a favorite of Evensky and many other investment professionals. A second possibility is USAA Investment Cornerstone. Although Cornerstone was set up in 1984 primarily as an inflation hedge, it has evolved into a well-rounded player investing in gold, real estate, and U.S. and foreign stocks and bonds.

—Mary Rowland

JUST GET STARTED

Finding an investment strategy that works for you and your family can be a daunting task. Many members find that evaluating all of the investment options out there is intimidating as well. But the most common advice that financial planners give is "just get started!"

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TO YOUR HEALTH

Stopping A Killer

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month—but studies show educators don't know how dangerous the disease can be. What's NEA doing to keep members informed?

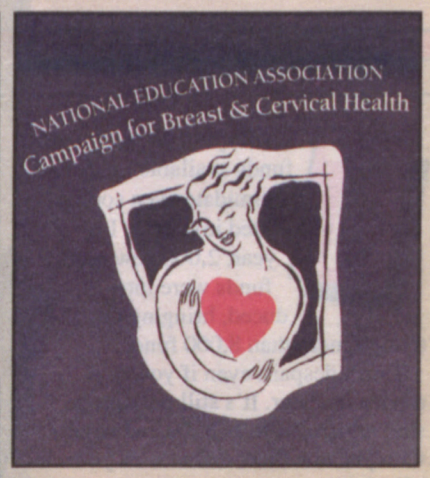
"Teachers are very busy taking care of other people, but they don't always take good care of themselves," says Helen Pennington, a North Carolina teacher and activist for breast cancer awareness.

That may be why, Pennington thinks, female educators are more succeptible to breast cancer fatalities than women in almost every other occupation.

A 1993 study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health concludes that female educators have unusually high breast cancer death rates.

"I never realized how many of my friends had breast cancer or were close to someone who had it," Pennington says. "It made me take a step back."

The same NIOSH study found that 42 percent of teachers over 40 have never had a mammogram. "A lot of people have financial constraints because their insurance won't cover the cost of getting a breast examination," Pennington says. "Others say they don't have time."



NEA's Health Information Network is taking the time to educate members about the dangers of breast cancer. In addition to participation in national education efforts, NEA is piloting awareness campaigns on the local level.

Two local Associations in North Carolina—one in New Hanover County and one in Robeson County—aim to make teachers more aware of the dangers of breast cancer.

The projects, part of NEA's Campaign for Breast and Cervical Health, receive support from NEA and funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Pennington, a reading teacher at Sunset Park Elementary School, directs the awareness project in New Hanover County. "It's really sad to see how many people aren't aware," Pennington says.

In June, the committee set up a two-day "wellness retreat" for educators. About 40 school employees attended the half-day workshops, which emphasized early detection.

Some of the speakers at the wellness retreat were breast cancer survivors. "It took on a whole new meaning for everyone after listening to these women speak about what they'd gone through," Pennington remembers.

More wellness workshops are being planned in New Hanover and Robeson Counties. "We need to get the information out there," stresses Pennington. "Breast cancer won't give you time to get informed. We can't wait, either."

—Noah Lang

Resources

➤ NEA's Campaign for Breast and Cervical Health has calendars, bookmarks, and pins to remind NEA members of the importance of early detection. For limited, free copies, contact the NEA Health Information Network, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-7570, FAX 202/822-7775, or e-mail neahin1@aol.com.

➤ To honor a person who had cancer, you can contribute to the Vivian Roy Bowser Cancer Fund. Bowser was a long-time Association leader. Checks should be made payable to HIN.

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International

RIGHTS WATCH

Around the World

NEA helped create the Education International in 1993, in part, to help safeguard the human rights of children and educators worldwide. At the EI's first World Congress this past summer, the delegates gathered in Zimbabwe reviewed case after case where EI protests have helped make a difference over the past three years.

In other cases, justice remains distant. Some examples of progress made—and progress wanting:

➤ In **Malawi**, the national teachers union struck when the government refused to implement an agreement with teachers. Teacher union leaders received death threats, and strikers were threatened with dismissal. After pressure from the EI, the government implemented the agreement, and no dismissals were carried out.

➤ In the former **Yugoslavia**, the government refuses to reinstate 26,000 teachers of Albanian descent who were dismissed for not accepting a Serbian school curriculum that bans the use of the Albanian language. The government continues to arrest and detain teachers who have tried to set up an alternative school system for the 300,000 Albanian children in the Kosovo region. An EI delegation to Belgrade was stonewalled by government officials.

➤ In **Rwanda**, more than 14,000 teachers have been assassinated. EI has helped provide humanitarian relief to refugees and is working to help the teachers union rebuild.

➤ In **Chad**, government officials jailed teacher union leaders protesting the nonpayment of salaries for 15 months, then released them after EI mobilized international pressure.

➤ In **Myanmar (Burma)**, all trade union activity is illegal, and gross violations of human rights standards have forced many teachers into exile. Others remain active in an underground network that receives support from EI.

Resources

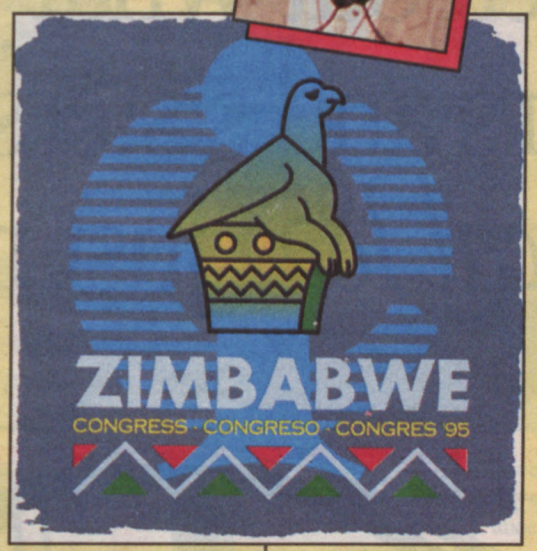
To help educators participate in the "Global Teach-In" on the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, the UN recently released a new instructional kit.

The kit features activities that focus on global issues ranging from migration and pollution to health and peace. Materials are available in the six official UN languages—English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Russian.

For more information about the kits, contact Carolyn Schuler Uluc, UN50 Secretariat, S-3161, United Nations, NY 10017, 212/963-1072, FAX 212/963-1185.

For the first time in world history, most children now at least start school. But only one-third of the kids who start ever reach the sixth grade. That's one reason the world's educators are. . .

Ready For Change



Today, on the eve of the Information Age, 12-year-olds in many parts of the world are more likely to be standing in a sweatshop than sitting in a classroom.

That stark reality was the backdrop this past July for the broadest gathering of educators ever seen—the first "World Congress" of the Education International, the new global body that NEA helped create in 1993.

The Education International, or EI as it's known, includes 258 educator organizations from 141 different countries. Almost all these nations sent delegates to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, for EI's inaugural World Congress.

The theme of the Congress—"Educators United, Ready for Change"—echoed throughout four days of discussion and debate.

What's uniting educators, EI President Mary Hatwood Futrell (pictured above) told delegates in her opening keynote address, is the multi-faceted economic, political, and social revolution that's transforming how the world works. In today's new "internationalized" global environment, boundaries between nations count for less and less.

What counts for more and more, explained EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen of the Netherlands, are huge, multinational corporations that routinely move plants and jobs from country to country, searching for the lowest tax rates and the cheapest labor. These companies leave behind devastated communities unable to afford basic public services—most notably education—for their people.

"Resources have been so severely cut," added EI President Futrell, a former NEA president, "that in some countries the only ones in schools who have books are teachers."

Internally, within nations, pressures like these are pitting ethnic groups against one another in battles over scarce resources—and fostering intolerance that can often turn violent.

"The world is far more complex, interdependent, and intercultural than at any time in the history of humankind," said Futrell. "To survive, we must respect one another."

Before they left Zimbabwe, delegates at the World Congress committed the EI to action in three "priority" areas. They voted approval of resolutions that:

➤ Protect human and trade union rights around the world.

➤ Reject continuing moves to privatize education.

➤ Promote reforms that help make schools effective tools for achieving social and economic progress.

To translate these resolutions into real gains for children, the Education International will coordinate a variety of campaigns and projects over the next three years.

EI will work with member organizations, for instance, to prevent education discrimination against girls—around the world, 76 million fewer girls than boys attend school—and stop the growing exploitation of child labor.

And to help involve member educator groups—and individual educators—in advancing the agenda adopted in Zimbabwe, the EI will soon unveil a new presence on the Information Superhighway that will be accessible from computer keyboards in every corner of the world. Watch *NEA Today* for more details.

NEA members can plug into the EI right now. The full text of major addresses at the first EI World Congress are available on NEA Online. Keyword: NEA Making News and click the Speech Library.

ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

A Chance To Learn

NEA's delegation at the Education International World Congress in Zimbabwe included 50 delegates and some three dozen observers. They found the Congress a unique opportunity to trade experiences and insights with educators from other countries.

Denver school librarian Lois Saul, for instance, learned that other nations seem to be outpacing the United States when it comes to incorporating technology into instruction. Australian education union leaders told her all about a new national technology initiative that's going to link all Australia's schools and students to the Internet.

Wisconsin's Pat Gille, an education support staffer at Northwest Wisconsin Technical College, found a similar commitment to new technology in Hong Kong. All that city's schools are now computer-linked, and teachers can call up any student's statistics at any time.

Many members of the NEA delegation spent time in Zimbabwe visiting local schools. Maryland language arts teacher Rosalind Yee was fascinated by Zimbabwe's approach to scheduling the school year. Students attend school in three terms: January-March, May-July, and September-November. The months of April, August, and December are school holidays.

Eaton County Education Association President Barbara Schram, a teacher in Grand Ledge, Michigan, visited an elementary school that packs in 1,300 students in two different daily shifts. Class size ranges up to 48 children per room.

California's Jim Thrasher, a resource specialist at Modesto High School, and Ndlovu Sifuso of the Zimbabwe Teachers Association discovered they shared a common interest in distance learning. The two plan to establish ongoing school-to-school connections that can link teachers and students in both countries.

IDEA EXCHANGE

Video Tour

At the beginning of each school year, I have a one-hour conference with each of my 30 students and their families in the comfort of their own living rooms. How do I have the time? I use technology.

I make a video highlighting the topics we will be covering and reviewing class rules and policies. I also explain my procedures and give parents tips on how they can help their children at home.

Then I send a copy of the video home with each child.

I also videotape the kids' monthly special presentations so that those parents who are unable to attend are still able to see their children at work. Of course, the children whose parents did attend also love to take the video home to savor.

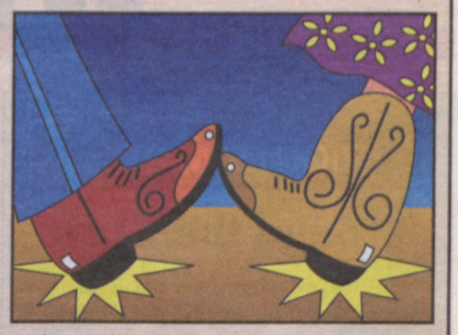
At the end of the year, I plan to edit the best of each video onto one tape. Copies of these videotapes will then be made available to my students' families as a permanent memento of their year in Room 7.

Dwayne Kohn
Ramon Garza Elementary
Bakersfield, California

Moves and Music

Music specialist Judy Brune and I put our heads together and came up with an integrated unit on country-western music and dancing for fourth and fifth graders.

We made the integrated physical education and music program part of the regular schedule for fourth and fifth graders at Hamilton and gave them a movement-centered experience with emphasis on international song and dance.



So instead of taking individual classes for 30 minutes at a time, we scheduled entire grade levels for two-hour blocks. At the end of the year, our students performed demonstrations or evening musicals for parents.

This year we're doing a different type of "movement through music" each month—ranging from disco to classical to patriotic.

Krista Winn
Hamilton Elementary School
Port Angelis, Washington

Sweet Rewards

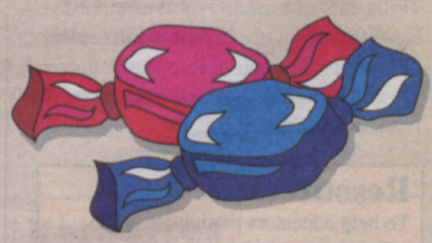
When students give oral reports, do you find others wanting to tune out and snooze? Here's a way to increase listening and analytical skills during report time.

I motivate my students to ask questions and learn their facts by offering a small reward.

If there are 28 kids in my class, I put 27 candies in a dish in front of the speaker. During the report, the kids listen to the speaker because they know they will each have an opportunity to ask one question about the topic.

If the speaker answers incorrectly, the questioner receives one of his candies. The speaker prepares thoroughly in order to keep all the candies. I found this method works well for students in grades two and up. And, of course, you can substitute raisins for candies.

Mary Flaming
Cedar Wood Elementary
Bothell, Washington



Share *Your* Ideas

Have any tips for this column? Pass them along in one of these five ways:

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SchoolSite

NEA members working to make schools run better

Paul Tople

POWER LUNCH

Two school districts in New York and Ohio turned struggling cafeterias into money-making propositions by letting food service workers make the decisions.

Not too long ago, school cafeterias in the Buffalo, New York suburbs of Kenmore and Tonawanda were losing about $10,000 per year, and 85 members of the Kenmore-Tonawanda School Employees Association feared their jobs were on shaky ground.

Meanwhile, in Brunswick, Ohio a private management firm in charge of food service was piling up huge annual debts. The district, tired of losing money, was looking for a change.

These days, both of these districts have highly profitable cafeterias resulting from a dramatic change in "management." Now food service workers in both districts call the shots.

It's an idea that makes sense. As senior custodian and former local Association President John Moony reasons, "Who could be better qualified to make decisions than the people who work in the cafeterias every day?"

But the answer wasn't always so clear. In the early 1990s, the Kenmore-Tonawanda district explored severe cutbacks and increased privatization as options.

Association members had a better idea. After hiring an independent accountant to assess the situation, they presented the district with a detailed plan to save money—without eliminating jobs or cutting salaries.

"The Association came in and bargained a great deal for us," says Leana Stilwell, a cook-manager.

The agreement created a committee made up of six people—three Association members and three administrators—to oversee cafeteria finances and allow the district and the support staff to accomplish goals together.

There was some apprehension at first. "People weren't quite sure this was the way to go," admits Stilwell, who serves on the committee. "Sometimes people are uncomfortable with change."

Workers adjusted quickly, however, thanks largely to the formation of another committee. That group of some 15 food service employees meets about once a month and offers ideas to the main committee—ideas like boosting catering to boost revenues. "We receive a lot of money from serving lunch at community events," Stilwell explains.

The district has also saved money by purchasing more food from the government at reduced prices. "The more lunches you sell, the more government commodities you're allowed to purchase," says Stilwell. "We carefully choose meals the students want to increase sales."

The result of the workers' efforts? The cafeterias have averaged about $150,000 in profit each of the past few years, Moony says. Half the money is spent on purchasing equipment, and the other half is kept in a savings fund.

According to Stilwell, cooperation between KTSEA and the district has been strong. Both sides are pleased about the financial prosperity.

"It's good to know that we have some say in the decision-making process," adds Stilwell, "and that the input of the women here really means something. Instead of throwing our arms up and saying 'no we can't,' we say "yes we can.'"

Kevin Higley

Who's the boss? NEA members such as Shirley Urbanek (top) and Leana Stilwell (above) help their cafeteria crews call the shots.

While the Kenmore-Tonawanda members have enjoyed the fruits of employee initiative for several years, a similar program in Brunswick, Ohio is just beginning to soar.

The 46 food service staff members in Brunswick's 10 school cafeterias generated $60,000 in profits this year—once workers began calling the shots. District officials ousted a private management firm in 1994 following several years of financial losses. The determination of the Brunswick Support Staff Association at the bargaining table convinced the district to let food service employees manage themselves—as long as the kitchens remained profitable.

"We just wanted to stay in the black so we could keep our jobs," says 23-year cafeteria veteran Shirley Urbanek, who was elected to coordinate their efforts. Turning a profit wasn't easy. Workers gave up six paid holidays, pay on snow days, and some of their medical insurance benefits.

"We've done without a lot," admits Urbanek. "But if we hadn't made some sacrifices, we probably wouldn't have made it. We'll look to keep saving money, and restore some things we've given up."

Employee sacrifices weren't the only ways Association members turned their kitchens around. Vending machines were placed in schools, and they turned in healthy dividends.

In addition, Brunswick employees often prepared food for administrative events as well as a few non-school functions. "That's one great way to bring in some extra money," says Urbanek. "We want to do more of it next year."

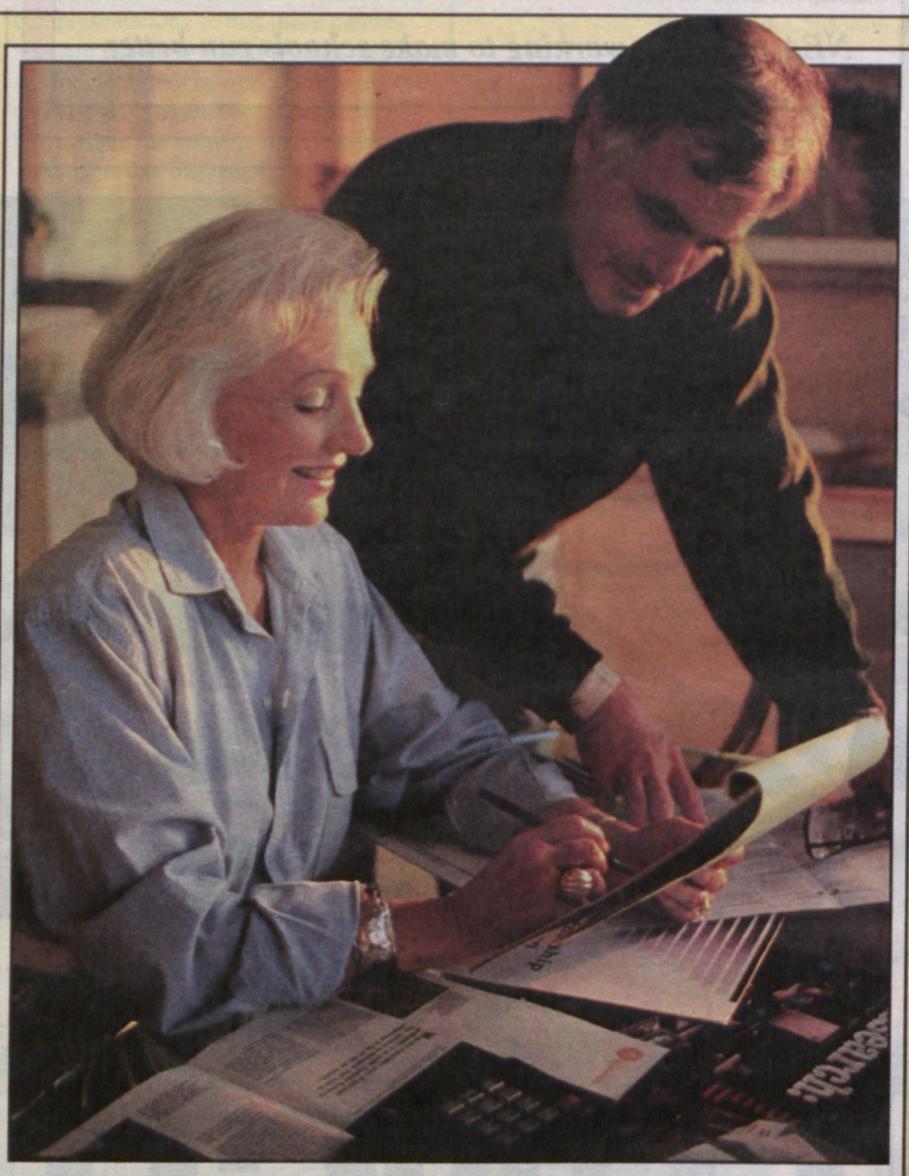
But the best way to increase revenues, according to Urbanek, is keeping the kids happy and healthy. "We strategically plan the menus to give the kids the best lunch we can," she says, "and that way, they buy more lunches. So far we've seen a positive response."

In Brunswick, success stems from creativity and teamwork. "It was very smooth sailing because the women really pulled together and cooperated," Urbanek says.

And, like their colleagues in Kenmore-Tonawanda, they proved an important point: "We showed every-

SchoolSite is a new *NEA Today* feature highlighting efforts by NEA members to make schools run more smoothly. What are you doing to create a better learning environment? Send your stories to: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Retirement



Bridging The Medigap

It's never been easier to choose wisely when buying a health insurance policy to supplement Medicare.

If you're considering purchasing Medigap insurance for the first time, or you want to replace an existing policy, you may be dreading the task. But there's no reason to—not anymore.

There was a time not so long ago when shopping for Medigap insurance was a frustrating, seemingly impossible task. There were more than 250 variations of Medigap insurance on the market, and many of the policies duplicated coverage provided by Medicare.

But all that changed in 1992, when a new Medigap law went into effect that simplified the process of purchasing Medigap insurance. That law replaced the hundreds of Medigap policies on the market with 10 standard benefit plans. It also established new rules regarding the sales practices of insurance agents and companies.

As a result, every older American who receives Medicare can now purchase a more understandable—and more appropriate—Medigap policy.

According to the United Seniors Health Cooperative, a not-for-profit consumer organization, the key to purchasing Medigap insurance is understanding Medicare's coverage and the benefits provided in the standard Medigap insurance plans.

Medigap is private health insurance designed to supplement Medicare—the federal health insurance program for persons over age 65—by filling some of the gaps in Medicare's coverage. Those gaps include coinsurance, deductibles and non-covered services.

In most states, older consumers can choose from among 10 standard Medigap policies. The policies contain graduated amounts of coverage that range from basic benefits for the least expensive policy to comprehensive for the most costly. The policies are labeled A through J, Plan A being the least comprehensive and Plan J the most.

Plan A pays for hospital stays over 60 days (Medicare covers only the first 60 days), reimburses for the 20 percent copayment for physicians' fees and laboratory charges, and pays for the first three pints of blood.

The coverage offered in Plan A is contained in all the other plans. But each more expensive plan adds coverage.

Plan J, the most comprehensive, covers Medicare's $716 hospital deductible, the $100 deductible for doctors' charges, physicians' charges in excess of the amounts approved by Medicare for specific procedures, emergency care while traveling abroad, at-home recovery care, prescription drugs, skilled nursing facility co-insurance, and preventive care.

Prices for the plans vary widely, depending on several factors, including the individual insurance company, the state in which the beneficiary lives, and the age of the beneficiary (some companies charge people more as they age).

If you purchased a Medigap policy before they were standardized, you may want to see whether you can get a better policy at a lower cost from among the 10 standard ones.

Be sure to compare the old and new policies carefully. Some older policies offer benefits not available in the new ones. Take your time shopping and comparing—once you change, you can't switch back. But there is a time limit for people who are about to turn 65, or who have done so within the last six months. If you fall into this category, you should decide soon which Medigap plan, if any, you want to buy.

That's because the standard Medigap plans must provide an open enrollment period of six months starting on your 65th birthday (or, if older, on the first day you enroll in Medicare Part B). During that window, you can't be denied coverage due to a pre-existing condition.

The issue of pre-existing conditions arises in another way. In general, under the new standard plans, waiting periods for pre-existing conditions can't last more than six months.

And if you're switching to a standard plan from an existing policy, and you've already met the pre-existing condition requirements under that earlier policy, a new waiting period can't be imposed.

Under the new law, insurers are forbidden to sell consumers more than one Medigap policy. Experts caution that no one needs more than one. High pressure sales tactics are also prohibited.

All the plans are guaranteed to be renewable for life as long as you pay your premium. They also come with a 30-day "free look" period that allows you to change your mind, return the policy, and get a refund of the premium paid.

The standard Medigap policies will by no means meet all your health concerns. None of them, for example, covers long-term care at home or in a nursing home, two of the largest health care expenses for older Americans. But the standard plans do make it easier to choose an appropriate policy and to make price comparisons.

The United Seniors Health Cooperative offers the following advice for selecting a Medigap policy:

➤ Learn about Medicare. Make sure you understand the program's basic coverage and gaps.

➤ Study the 10 standard Medigap plans. Decide which coverage would best meet your health needs and financial circumstances.

➤ Compare only the policies that meet your needs. Although the benefits are identical for all Medigap plans of the same type, the premiums vary widely among companies. United Seniors has found large variations in the prices companies charge, as much as 100 percent more for exactly the same coverage.

➤ Consider your alternatives. If you have limited income and assets, you may qualify for free coverage through Medicaid and other government programs. To learn more about these programs, call the Medicare Hotline at 800/638-6833.

➤ Review your current coverage. If you have health insurance through a federal, state, or municipal benefit plan, you may not need Medigap insurance, since your benefits may be better than any you can get through the standard Medigap plans. If a review of your plan reveals gaps in coverage, then you may want to consider buying Medigap insurance.

Every state plus Washington, D.C. has a state health insurance counseling program that will provide a free, impartial review of your existing coverage. To find the program nearest you, call the Eldercare Locator at 800/677-1116.

NEA-Retired members age 65 and older are eligible for enrollment in NEA's Medicare Supplement Program, available through the MemberCare portfolio of health insurance plans.

Program benefits have been designed to match the 10 standard plans. In Plans C through J, the program provides four enhancements to give you more for your money, including discounts on prescription drugs and dental, hearing and vision care. For more information about the plan and its availability in your state, contact NEA Member Benefits, 800/637-4636.

Your NEA

UNISERV PROGRAM CELEBRATES 25th ANNIVERSARY

A Quarter Century of Service

Despite changing times, the purpose of NEA's UniServ program—to protect and promote public education and the people who work in it—has remained constant.

When a few students accused Arkansas bus driver Sally Bryan of using four-letter words, she knew who to call.

"When I joined NEA/AEA, they gave me a card with a phone number on it. I called that number and got Bill Owen."

A UniServ veteran, Owen came to Bryan's defense—and the truth—quickly. It seems that Bryan disciplined a 16-year-old girl for kissing a boy on the bus. Next day, the girl and three younger children she babysat for made the charges.

In a disciplinary hearing, Owen questioned the younger kids, who couldn't keep up the lie for long. Relieved and grateful, Bryan went back to work the next day.

For the past 25 years, NEA UniServ staffers have been there when members need representation. But the intent of the UniServ program has always been broader.

In 1970, UniServ was intended "to build strong local Associations, capable of defending their members' interests in every regard and capable of promoting their members' interests in every matter."

Jeff Mitchell

Veteran UniServ staffer Bill Owen defended bus driver Sally Bryan—one of only six members in her local—against slander.

Dick Baldwin

Dee Simmons, formerly a paraprofessional in Washington State, is a graduate of NEA's UniServ Intern Program. She's been working with 13 locals in rural Wisconsin.

In 1995, that still rings true. But the definition of "members' interests" has expanded. Today's corps of 1,500 UniServ staffers handles grievances and arbitrations, negotiates contracts, organizes new members, coordinates professional development activities, and more.

A few examples:

➤ UniServ staffer Steve Confer led the way for a groundbreaking new approach to labor-management relations in New Albany, Indiana. As a result, the teachers there control the district's instructional budget.

➤ In Wausaukee, Wisconsin, UniServ staffer Dee Simmons helped a local Association of 58 members join with administrators and community members to elect a pro-public education school board.

➤ And in Garden Grove, California, UniServ staffer Peg Tracey trains school employees and parents to work together. "With 82 different languages spoken here, the issues are bigger than parent conferences and back-to-school night," she says. "It's a whole new ball game."

In fact, it's a whole *different* ball game in every local Association—that's why the UniServ program is primarily a local one, with funding assistance from the state Association and the NEA.

NEA's contribution—the largest single category in the NEA budget—is based on a fixed percentage of the dues active members pay. This year, the NEA contribution comes to $20 per active member.

Arkansas bus driver Sally Bryan says the money is well spent. "Bill Owen helped me more than you can imagine," she says. "And AEA/NEA is worth every penny."

PRESENT AT THE CREATION

Ken Melley is NEA's assistant executive director for public affairs. In 1970, he was the director of the just-created UniServ program.

What sparked the creation of UniServ?
You have to realize there was an awful lot going on in 1969 and '70. Teachers were just beginning to assume leadership of NEA, large numbers of teachers were beginning to bargain collectively, and there was a move to unite Association activities at the local, state, and national level.

How has UniServ changed over the years?
NEA is an ever-evolving, ever-changing organization. Who would have ever thought 25 years ago that UniServ would still be rolling along today? And yet, NEA members still need the basics—representation in grievances and at the bargaining table. What's new today is UniServ staffer's broader reach to improve education and bring communities and schools together.

What is UniServ's biggest contribution?
A lot of things have contributed to NEA's remarkable increase in membership over the years, but one of the most significant is UniServ. The UniServ program provides an unprecedented level of service to our members.

JUST THE FACTS

IN 1970:

- **Number of UniServ staff: 200**
- **Number of NEA members: 1.05 million**
- **NEA's contribution to local UniServ: $1.6 million**

IN 1995:

- **Number of UniServ staff: 1,500**
- **Number of NEA members: 2.2 million**
- **NEA's contribution to local UniServ: $38 million**

BOOK BEAT

Two Blasts of Fresh Air

Two new books—one statistical, one anecdotal—trash the rising tide of rhetoric about America's "failing" schools.

For the past dozen years, Americans have been fed a steady diet of bad news about their public schools. Most people swallow it without protest.

Most people—but not all. This fall, two new books belie the notion that America's public schools are failing. In fact, they paint a picture of success and hope.

The Manufactured Crisis and *Possible Lives* will revive many an educator weary of the mainstream media's heat and damnation.

The Manufactured Crisis: Myth, Fraud, and the Attack on America's Public Schools. David Berliner and Bruce Biddle. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 350 pp., $25.

Possible Lives: The Promise of Public Education in America. Mike Rose. Houghton Mifflin Company, 454 pp., $24.95.

Education researchers David Berliner and Bruce Biddle mince no words in *The Manufactured Crisis*: "The idea that American schools are now failing the nation," they write, "is a Big Lie."

Then they go on to prove it. Page after page, statistic after statistic, they explain the truth behind such myths as "Student achievement has fallen." "Errant nonsense," they proclaim, standing firmly in front of the facts.

In the same vein, UCLA education professor Mike Rose calls his book "a hopeful vision in a time of bitterness and lost faith."

Rose spent four years visiting public schools from Baltimore to Los Angeles, Chicago to rural Kentucky, looking for "a fresh language of educational critique and invention." He found exceptional teachers doing exceptional things.

Possible Lives is beautifully written. Each location is given its geographic and historic due. Classroom happenings are written in rich detail, often delving into minutiae that only an educator could love.

If there is an audience for good news about America's public schools, these two books will surely be bestsellers.

—Stefanie Weiss

The NEA Professional Library's Top Ten
NEA Bestsellers

Current Rank		Previous Rank
1	***The First Year Teacher: Teaching with Confidence (K-8)***, Bosch & Kersey. (Price $14.95) The ultimate first-year teacher's handbook. (1862-1-10-FB)	[6]
2	***Student Portfolios***, NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Insights from your colleagues on how to use portfolios to assess and enhance student learning. (2901-1-00-FB)	[4]
3	***Countdown to the First Day of School***, Schell & Burden. ($4.95) A "must-have" checklist for every beginning elementary teacher. (2150-9-00-FB)	[2]
4	***The Healthy School Handbook: Conquering the Sick Building Syndrome and Other Environmental Hazards In and Around Your School***, Norma L. Miller, ed. ($21.95) Find out how sick building syndrome affects teaching and learning (and what you can do about it). (1863-X-20-FB)	[1]
5	***Innovative Discipline***, NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Innovative discipline strategies that elementary and secondary teachers say can change the whole cultural of your school. (2904-6-00-FB)	[7]
6	***Toward Inclusive Classrooms***, NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Six stories that show how students with special needs can learn with their peers. (2903-8-00-FB)	[8]
7	***Flirting or Hurting? A Teacher's Guide on Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment in Schools (Grades 6-12)***, by Nan Stein and Lisa Sjostrom. ($15.95) Ways to stop and prevent harassment. (1864-8-00-FB)	[11]
8	***Inspiring Discipline: A Practical Guide for Today's Classrooms***, Merrill Harmin. ($12.95) The best of modern theory and research in a form that works for real teachers in real classrooms. (2950-X-00-FB)	[3]
9	***Portfolios: Assessing Learning in the Primary Grades***, Marianne Lescher. ($4.95) A classroom teacher's unique view of what the research says. (1094-9-00-FB)	[5]
10	***Multi-Age Classrooms***, NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. ($9.95) Six examples of how mixed-age groupings inspire teachers to innovate. (2907-0-00-FB)	[9]

The numbers in brackets indicate last month's rankings, if any. All the resources listed above are published by and available from the NEA Professional Library, a service for NEA members financed solely by the sale of books and other professional development materials to the education community. To order any title listed here or for more information, call 800/229-4200. (Note: The prices listed are member prices, where applicable. Also, a shipping and handling charge will be added to all orders.)

EDUCATION MARKETPLACE

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS

PTSD in Children, a video for school personnel. Features 5 specialists. $95. 800/888-5236.

EMPLOYMENT

Jobs for teachers/principals. Send SASE to NTC, Box 1257, Boston, MA 02118-1257, 617/267-3204.

SOFTWARE

Let your computer do your grades in minutes with *TS Gradebook 2.0* for Windows. 10 day money-back guarantee. Call 800/393-3415. $67.50.

Teachers on the Internet!!!! Where to go & how to get there designed exclusively for teachers. Send $8.95 to NetLink, 106 Ramapo Plaza, Suite #214, Pomona, NY 10970, 607/722-0660.

TRAVEL

Xmas Volunteer Vacations. Village stays/projects. Thailand-Kenya-Costa Rica. 415/922-5538.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS

School Business Program K-8 Where School Means Busine$$ Manual $49.95. Allow 2-4 weeks. School Business Center of WI., 8831 W. National Ave., West Allis, WI 53227. 414/541-7904.

Flags! Int'l, Hist. etc. 400 styles $15 ea. quan. discounts. Free brochure. 203/387-1776.

Show & Tell educational resources, inc. 800/322-2256 for free catalog of lesson & classroom posters. Most @ $7 ea.

The Online Educator makes the Internet a useful classrm. tool. $25/yr. Box 251141, Bloomfield, MI 48325. Fax 810/737-3026.

101 Daily English Lesson plans. Time/Work Savers, grades 4-12. Free samples 800/294-5171.

PUBLICATIONS

Middle School Yearbook. New how-to guide by teacher. Free info: CP, 7226 W. Colonial Dr., Suite 404, Orlando, FL 32818.

CONFERENCES

"JFK-RFK-MLK: New Evidence from the Files." Nat'l Conf., 10/20-22, Wash., DC, 202/310-1858.

FINANCIAL

Now you can borrow from $3,000 to $15,000 at favorable fixed rates and take up to six years to repay. The **NEA Credit Plan®** is the perfect way to consolidate your high-interest debt. Call 800/525-1211 for information on how to apply quickly and confidentially by mail.

DOES YOUR MONEY WORK AS HARD AS YOU DO?

Earn above average interest with an NEA-Sponsored FDIC-Insured Money Market ™ Account.

And $500 is all it takes to open an account!

Call NEA Financial Services at 1-800-348-4632 for a current rate quote and to request an application.

The NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate® CD is exclusively for NEA members. It offers higher interest, FDIC safety, and guaranteed returns. Call NEA Financial Services at 800/348-4632 for current rates and to request an application.

To place an Education Marketplace advertisement...Just send in your notice, with appropriate payment, to Education Marketplace at the address below. Rates: Educational Products/Services and Academic Employment Opportunities Categories: $115 per line; 3 line minimum. Display ads—$895 per column inch, 5-inch maximum. Consumer Products/Services, Summer Employment, and Business Opportunities Categories: $130 per line; 3 line minimum. Display ads—$1155 per column inch, 5-inch maximum. Deduct 10% if you're an NEA member. Please count 30 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation). Contact NEA TODAY Education Marketplace, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036; 202/822-7913.

Debate

Should Teachers Live Where They Teach?

YES

Mary Nicholas Lloyd-Booker is a preschool enrichment teacher at Central Elementary School in Pontiac, Illinois. A member of the Pontiac Education Association, Lloyd-Booker has worked with children for 28 years, 17 of them in Cleveland, Ohio.

For many years I didn't live in the community where I taught. Now I do. So I speak from experience when I say that doing so enhances a teacher's relationships with students and parents both in and out of the classroom.

When I meet my students with their parents, siblings, and other family members in stores, at community functions, and in other informal settings, we have relaxed, friendly conversations. We become comfortable with one another, paving the way for better parent cooperation in the future, on anything from helping with a class project to dealing with a problem involving their child.

These public encounters also provide me with the opportunity to see how parents handle their children when they misbehave. Often I've come to better understand why a particular child acts a certain way in class. For example, when parents bribe, threaten, or make outrageous requests of their child, that child will often rebel at home and at school.

It's true that when you live in your teaching community, you become a role model. People observe your relationship with your own family and expect you to be a positive, trustworthy, creative, dedicated influence in their educational and community life.

Many educators choose not to live in their school community because they fear that community members will be into their business. But it's been my experience that what goes on behind closed doors is usually private. Families have their own lives and see no problem in allowing their child's teacher to have a personal life, too.

The way I see it, teachers who live outside their teaching community are sending mixed messages. Students often get the impression that these teachers feel they're superior because they choose to live elsewhere.

As a teacher, you say you're concerned about the community and that you want to be available for activities above and beyond the call of duty. But when you dash out the door each day to start that stressful 40-minute ride home, you send a different message.

Those of us who live in our school community can more easily attend local sports events and fairs. We can participate more readily in local fund-raising projects. We frequent the same library as our students and walk our dog on the same streets.

My students often see me riding my bicycle. I feel that the fact that I adhere to all safety regulations, including wearing a helmet, can't help but have a positive effect on them.

At this year's NEA Representative Assembly, the Reverend Jesse Jackson offered a five-step formula to ensure school success for our children. I'd like to point out how those same points relate to me, as a teacher who lives in her school community.

Take your child to school. When I see parents bringing their children to school, as I arrive in my car, bike, or on foot, I know by their actions that they care about their kids.

Meet your child's teachers. I live in the neighborhood so I've already met my children's parents. In fact, I was introduced to grandma and grandpa at the neighborhood restaurant.

Exchange telephone numbers. Because I'm a community resident, my telephone number is accessible. Parents can feel comfortable calling me when they have a school or personal concern.

The first call I ever received was from a student's parents, asking to join us on a field trip the following day. My answer was an exuberant *yes!*

Encourage families to turn off the TV for three hours each evening. Once again, because I'm a community resident and have the same TV schedule as my students, I'm well aware of the shows that might distract kids. I can redirect their attention to constructive school involvement.

Pick up your child's report card every nine weeks. I can remind parents when I see them at the neighborhood bakery or the dentist's office.

Living in the community where I work allows me to take advantage of many informal teachable moments with parents. I can initiate stimulating discussions about life situations whether enjoying a class project or waiting at the automobile repair shop.

NO

Karen Bell has taught high school English for 29 years, the last 26 of them with California's Jurupa Unified School District, in an unincorporated area west of Riverside. She's been president of NEA-Jurupa and a state council rep to the California Teachers Association.

Early in my teaching career, my then husband and I moved to the district where I was teaching. We were strongly encouraged to participate in the life of that small town of 4,400.

One of the first things we did was register to vote. The registrar was pleased and surprised when we indicated our political party of choice. She said that most teachers decline to do so, preferring to be "neutral." She encouraged us to urge other teachers to do as we'd done. But many veteran teachers said it wasn't worth the trouble it caused with some people in the community.

Two years later, I interrupted my career to raise my children, and my husband began teaching in the district. We dove into community life. Eventually, he was elected to the city council.

What followed for us was a lesson in the kind of political pressure that still exists in far too many cities and towns today. In the course of fulfilling his responsibilities, my husband apparently incurred someone's wrath—and he was expected to pay a price.

When the school board reviewed his contract for permanent status, he was offered an opportunity to resign or be dismissed. The reason given was that he was "so arrogant and aggressive on the city council." Yet the board commended him for being such a fine teacher!

When the board counsel told the members they couldn't dismiss my husband because of decisions he'd made as an elected official, that they'd have to find other reasons, they did.

They charged him with lateness and pulling a boy by the shoulders when he tapped the boy to step out of line. The courts were prohibited from reviewing the charges. The district lost some excellent teachers who moved elsewhere as a result of this action.

I know several teacher-parents who've had to deal with community pressure because of the exploits of their children. Teachers' kids who do well are accused of receiving special treatment.

An outstanding high school athlete goofs on a play that costs a championship and the boy's parents are inundated with complaints, profanities, and obscene phone calls. If a parent is also a teacher in that community, the pressure is more intense.

Then there's the pressure on a teacher's own children. It was difficult when classmates—and on rare occasions, teachers—discovered that my children's parents were teachers. But since we didn't teach in that district, it wasn't an overwhelming problem.

I could participate in their school activities as a parent without the complication of also being a colleague or union representative for my child's teacher.

Sometimes there are economic reasons why teachers can't live where they teach. Here in Southern California, teacher pay is lower in the beach cities than in inland communities, but good housing is much more affordable inland.

As a result, some teachers choose to work in a beach area and live in an area with lower housing costs. In reverse, some teachers opt for higher salaries but live in the beach areas. Either way, many of us spend lots of time on the freeways.

Because teachers are so visible in the communities where they teach, it's difficult for them to maintain much privacy. Some I know have been criticized for their mates, their living style, the way they maintain their property, and more.

Communities expect a lot from their teachers, even when they're not "on duty." In some communities, teachers are expected to attend "acceptable" churches only, belong or not belong to certain organizations, sign petitions, participate in community events—even lead them! People assume that the teacher wants to do these things as an example to students.

As rewarding as teaching is, it's also stressful. It doesn't occur to some folks that teachers may be opposed to the activity, have other plans, or simply need a rest from high intensity involvements.

Because I live only seven miles from my school, I can easily participate in the activities of my teaching district. And by living in a nearby city, I can participate in the political and social life of my community according to my interests and beliefs without worrying about its negative impact on my job, my family, or my students.

Letters

WATCH THE LANGUAGE

In your September issue you printed an interview with Eileen Collins, the first American woman to pilot a spaceship. In the otherwise informative article, staff writer David Sheridan asks Collins "Isn't that (test piloting) scarier than hell?" My question to you is: Was the language necessary?

I don't consider myself a prude, but I see a real dichotomy in the position you have taken against violence and your use of violent or profane language. Most teachers that I know don't let students use the word "hell" in the classroom, nor would they use it.

When considering the issue of what is best for society and for children, I feel that fewer curses in the media would directly benefit both.

Joetta Schneider
Worthington, West Virginia

NO CUTS

In a time when there's a good deal of talk and concern over welfare reform, programs like the one I teach in should be a model for the nation.

After 26 years of experience as a social worker, I now teach parenting and family living skills classes in the Richland County public schools. Funding for the program comes from the district and from the South Carolina State Department of Social Services.

My students are mostly teen mothers working to receive their high school diplomas. These young women are highly motivated and should be commended for keeping their babies and taking responsibility for their lives.

High schools throughout the nation should have courses in parenting and family living skills so that all of the social ills we, as a nation, face could be kept at a minimum.

Freedom Nubée
Columbia, South Carolina

LEARNING'S REWARDS?

I wonder about the use of principal promises to get hair cut all off, to kiss a pig, or to bungee jump from a 22-story platform if kids do. . . fill in the blank (September, Trends).

After 33 years of teaching, I'm concerned that something has happened to natural curiousity and the desire to learn, invent, or create that comes from within rather than from outside stimulants.

Does it seem to you that there must be an outside reward for getting kids to learn rather than an intrinsic desire to know? If so, then something very important is missing in us all.

Susan Swenson
Lafayette, Colorado

MAGNETIC APPEAL

The Montgomery County, Maryland programs described in a recent debate ("Do Magnet Schools Exacerbate Tracking?" May) associate magnet schools with "the chosen few" and the grouping of "students of a certain ability level."

In contrast, the primary purpose of the 132 magnet schools of choice in the Los Angeles Unified School District is to offer students a chance to participate in a voluntary integration program, while pursuing academic interests in a special environment.

Magnet programs here are open to all students residing within the district. Admission is based on the number of openings at the school site. These openings are filled on a random basis, by computer, based upon priority points and the need to maintain the magnet's ethnic balance.

The only magnets with eligibility criteria are the 25 gifted/high ability magnet centers and the five highly gifted magnet centers.

The program works. As evidence, many parents have chosen to put their children in magnet programs instead of sending them to private schools. And we get thousands of applications each year from parents whose children are in private schools but want to come back to our nationally recognized public magnet schools.

Theodore Alexander, Jr.
Assistant Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified School District

Both Allen Avery and Leslie Backus make excellent points concerning the good and bad effects of a magnet program on students within a magnet school. But they failed to mention the devastating effect that magnet schools can have on other nearby high schools.

Backus, enthusiastic about the magnet program at Montgomery Blair High School, where she teaches, talks about magnets being used in the Montgomery County school system in Maryland "to counteract the effects of demographics on school populations. The school system can't correct the major racial, social, and economic imbalances in our society, but we must make the effort," Backus says. The Blair magnet school is such an effort.

It's true that the Blair corner of Montgomery County is a poorer area, that there is a large proportion of struggling, low-income families and a transient student population.

However, other nearby high schools have these same problems. But there are no magnets in these nearby high schools, and they are losing many of their brightest students to the magnets. Consequently, these nearby high schools are becoming smaller, and they're not able to provide the wide variety of course offerings that the larger high schools can.

The high schools near the Blair magnet, such as Albert Einstein, are good schools. Most have excellent leadership and many fine teachers, as well as a hard-working core of parents, eager for the success of their children. But they can't compete with the nearby magnet school, and each year, more and more academically gifted students from these nearby high schools leave to attend a magnet.

Using magnet schools to help correct the major racial, social and economic imbalances in our county, while laudable in intent, can become an overall negative to the educational system when it's done without regard to the concomitant academic sacrifice and lowered self-esteem of nearby schools.

Martha Tarkington
Silver Spring, Maryland

WHERE ARE THE ARTS?

As a NEA member, I regularly receive and read *NEA Today*. Over the years, I have been very disappointed with the lack of information on the arts in education. As a music educator, I am keenly aware that new national standards have included the arts as an integral part of the curriculum. Yet I cannot recall ever reading an article in your publication that addresses this issue.

My music curriculum regularly includes history (the lives and times of the great composers), sociology (multi-cultural music), science (acoustics), mathematics (rhythm variations, division of beat) and English (analysis of lyrics).

I am always looking for new ideas, and turn to periodicals, like *NEA Today*, for inspiration. I would like to see some articles addressing this area of education.

Theresa Ronan
Stoughton, Massachusetts

VALUING FAILURE

It's hard to describe the delight with which my wife and I read Gary Wilson's letter ("Feed the Children," May). His comment, "responsibility removed is responsibility forgotten," truly hit the mark.

Why are we afraid to assign responsibility for children's behavior to the child or the parents? Are we afraid neither parents nor children can exercise control?

To be sure, some won't. It's unfortunate, but there are parents who simply will not help with homework, show an interest in school, or assign any value to learning. That's bad, but it happens. Teachers witness it every day.

I wonder, though, if society doesn't need a certain amount of failure. I know that sounds cruel, but failure does an important thing—it shows us why we don't want to fail.

When a neighbor's child is expelled for threatening a teacher or consistently making failing grades, it makes us realize we don't want the same thing to happen to our kids.

Michael Flaigher
Pekin, Indiana

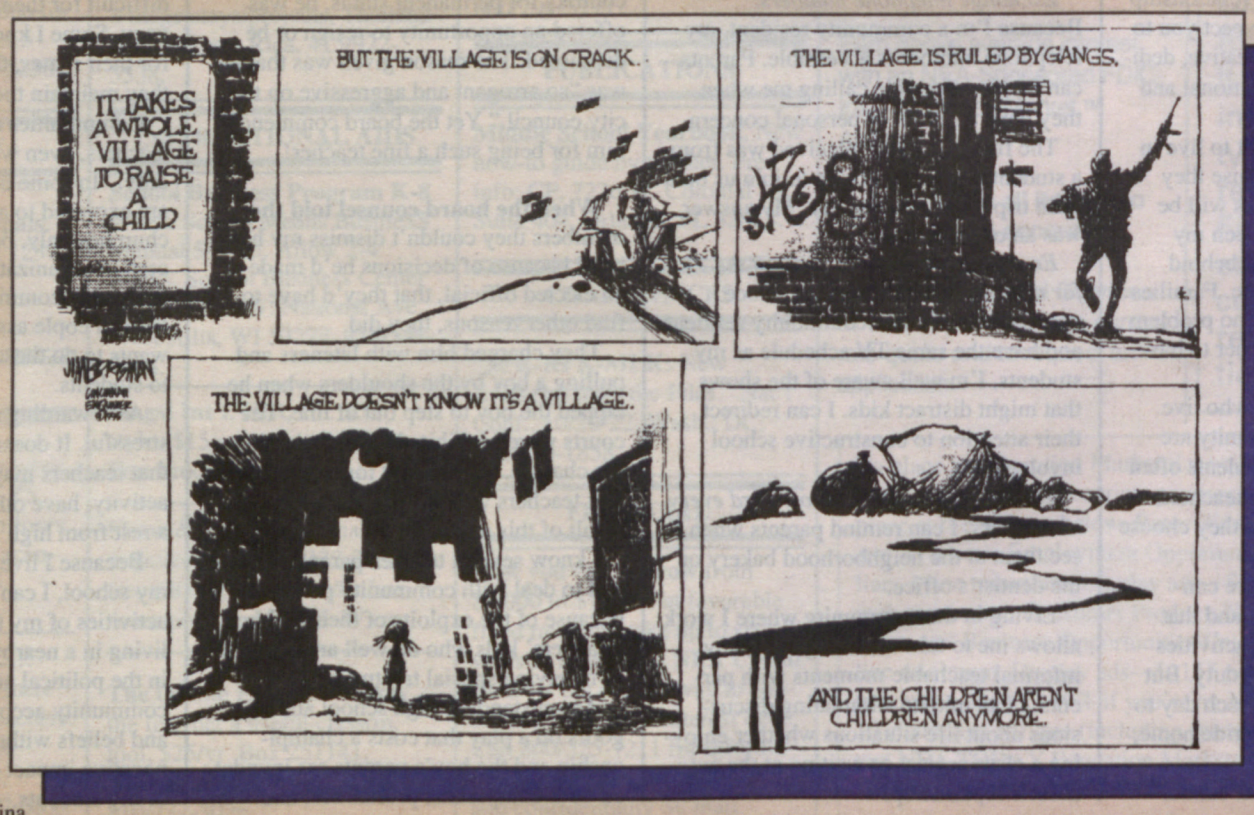
KUDOS

I was thrilled to read that those who tried to prevent a family life educator in Virginia from teaching about homosexuality as part of the sex education curriculum failed (May, Human Rights).

I commend the educator, Jerald Newberry, for his courage, send congratulations to the Fairfax Education Association for its support, and thank the NEA for selecting Newberry for a human rights award.

Knowledge is power, and it's the schools' responsibility to share all the knowledge they can with students. I'm pleased to see that my dues are supporting excellent members.

Diane Morin
St. Paul, Minnesota


IT TAKES A WHOLE VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD
BUT THE VILLAGE IS ON CRACK.
THE VILLAGE IS RULED BY GANGS.
THE VILLAGE DOESN'T KNOW IT'S A VILLAGE.
AND THE CHILDREN AREN'T CHILDREN ANYMORE.

CONTRADICTIONS

In "The School as Billboard" (Grassroots, May), advertising in the schools is described as

LETTER FROM: Kodiak, Alaska

Where the Past Meets the Future

"What was that thump?" I asked as the amphibious Grumman Goose took off from a gravel landing strip in a rural village on Kodiak Island. The pilot circled the strip, peering down to see what had made the noise, and announced nonchalantly, "Looks like the rear wheel just fell off the plane."

That incident in 1975 seemed like a rather inauspicious start to my teaching career in Alaska, but over my 20 years of travel up and down the Connecticut-size length of Kodiak Island, I have found that those vintage World War II planes can bring passengers and pilot through many a difficult situation.

For one, they can land on water as well as on the ground, a fact that brings a great comfort when the only place to wait out the storm is on the surface of the Pacific Ocean. They can deliver 1,600 pounds of Christmas presents on December 24 when the wind has been gusting over 50 mph. And they can medivac a student with appendicitis to the nearest hospital, 90 air miles away.

The Goose is a symbol of what I like best about Alaska and Alaskans: Common sense prevails. We combine the best of the past with the promise of the future. Alaskans will continue to get reliable, workhorse service from the Goose at the same time that we benefit from a network of communication satellites launched into polar orbit.

This combination of the old and the new is also the hallmark of Alaska's system of rural education. Our state has over 100 one-, two-, and three-teacher schools in remote, isolated areas. My husband, Ned, and I have team-taught in two of them for the past 20 years—Akhiok, a K-12 school in an Alutiiq village of 70 people at the south end of Kodiak Island, and Chiniak, a K-10 school in a fishing and logging village of 150 people in the northeastern part of the island.

Of necessity, these schools have multi-age classrooms where students progress at their own pace, small groupings of students who stay together in a family atmosphere for several years, parent involvement, cooperative learning, hands-on and project-oriented activities, theme-based, interdisciplinary teaching, emphasis on community issues, and student self-evaluation.

We hold on to the traditional sense of community—the people you live with and see every day—while we look outward to the enlarged sense of community made possible by satellites and microwave relay stations. We value wisdom that is intuitive and integrated and leads to multi-competent human beings in a world where knowledge is increasingly fragmented and specialized.

In our school, we use seminar-style discussions that center on pieces of writing or art ranging from Euclid's elements to Native-American sculpture.

In one of my favorite sessions, my fourth through seventh grade class read a folk tale from the Middle East, "The Wolf and the Dog," in which a starving, wild wolf meets a well-fed domesticated dog. After hearing that the dog gets three meals a day in exchange for his work, the wolf decides to try working for the dog's master. As they near the village, the wolf questions the dog about the missing ring of fur on his neck. "Oh" explains the dog, "that's where my master puts a collar and chain on every night to keep me in the shed. After awhile, you hardly notice it." Immediately, the wolf turns around and never comes back.

Before any discussion of the story took place, the students voted on whether they would prefer to live like the dog or the wolf. All students, without exception, voted that they would prefer to be like the wolf. When the student-led discussion began, the initial talk was enthusiastically focused on the glories of a life of freedom.

Eventually, I asked if there was anything appealing about the dog's life. After a long silence, Andrew ventured that security had some value. Katrina pointed out that she liked the feeling of pride she had when she had done a job responsibly. Molly observed that in some ways the dog's chain could be thought of as a positive thing, that it could stand for the love that ties us to our families.

Marbou remarked that this must be why his dad worked so hard and made so many sacrifices. Daryl, once firmly on the wolf's side, mused that the wolf was free only because he had no ties. Deric called for another vote.

This time half the class preferred the dog's life, and the other half were undecided. John commented, "That's pretty interesting. We all changed our minds just from listening to each other."

Being connected to a community, being a responsible community member, is an old idea, but it's an idea that each new generation of students needs to discover and explore.

Whenever I recall this discussion, it reminds me of the baskets that the Alutiiq people on Kodiak Island weave from tundra grass. Just as each blade of grass gains strength and beauty as it is woven into the intricate pattern of the basket, so the diversity of our students' voices resound as they learn to listen to each other while they weave together the fabric of our nation's democracy.

—Elaine Griffin

NEA member Elaine Griffin is the 1995 National Teacher of the Year.

being somewhat "Whittle-esque." Imagine my surprise when I saw a full page ad on page 10 hawking McDonald's educational and nutrition programs.

Since McDonald's products are widely known to contain enormous amounts of fat, sodium, and cholesterol, and are hardly considered to be good nutrition, what kind of examples are they providing? After all, their bottom line is profit.

It makes me feel bad to see *NEA Today* accept this kind of advertising. Somehow I feel integrity is involved and is being lost.

Barbara Herzmark
Tucson, Arizona

CALCULATIONS

Robert Hilton's letter (May) includes, in my experience, incorrect information. He states that "teachers work for 180 days. Nurses, accountants, engineers—all the others—go for 250 days."

I was a nurse before becoming a teacher, and as such, I had 12 paid holidays plus three weeks' vacation. That means that I worked 235 days, not 250. Plus, as a nurse, I received time and a half for overtime and was able to come home without having a pile of work to do at night.

Hilton seems to believe that those in other careers either have no vacation time at all or have no holidays.

Karen Stone
Andover, Massachusetts

SEGREGATION?

I was ecstatic to hear about the success of an African-American immersion program in Milwaukee (Human Rights, March). But I'm concerned that when children leave the program, they'll be at a cultural disadvantage. My fear is that this type of system actually encourages what we've worked so hard to undo—segregation.

When students are taught according to their ethnic background, they undoubtedly gain a far better appreciation for their culture than they would otherwise get in a traditional classroom. But they aren't getting an equal appreciation for the hundreds of other cultures in the world.

Although I'm happy immersion is working for the students of Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School, I tremble to think of the day they leave its sheltered walls. They'll be right back where they started—living in a multicultural world without knowing how.

Lori Grupe
Winona, Minnesota

SPECIAL EDITION

After reading the *NEA Today* edition for education support members (September), I had to write and say thank you for the special attention paid to us.

But one very important aspect of the salary coverage was left out. Although most support employees are considered full-time employees, they don't get paid during the summer months, nor are they—in Wisconsin at least—eligible for unemployment compensation.

I've always thought this was a gender issue, and after reading your magazine, I'm convinced there's gender discrimination here. Most support members—81 percent—are women. But the support members who work year-round or get paid higher salaries—machine operators, security guards, technical support workers—are mostly men. It's high time for NEA to address this inequality.

Yes, education support members make a very competitive hourly wage, but when yearly pay is considered, these members—particularly the female ones—are at the short end of the stick.

David Aponte
LaCrosse, Wisconsin

Editor's Note: NEA's 250,000 education support members receive a special edition of NEA Today *each September. Teachers who'd like to see a copy should ask their support colleagues or contact us in one of the ways suggested below.*

MATH ANXIETY?

I had a difficult time reading Ed Bleeden's answer to the question "Should Schools Offer All-Girl Math Classes?" (Debate, February). The reason? I kept going back to one of his early sentences: "The higher performing students are mostly boys."

I'm incredulous that this "boys must be better than girls in math" theme is still circulating—and in a national publication at that!

The fact is that some girls have always performed as well as some boys, but there are far fewer girls who stay in math. Bleeden appears to confuse quantity with quality.

Most math teachers believe that there are many ways to resolve a problem. All-girl math classes certainly appear to be one way. Basing an argument against the formation of such classes on the basis that girls will have no role models and thus won't be able to achieve to an appropriate level is ludicrous.

As the saying goes: "If you teach the way you have always taught, you'll get what you always got."

D.S. Dow
Dublin, California

Let's Talk!

Letters are edited for length and clarity. Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

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